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THE LIFE OF



LÉON PAPIN-DUPONT

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VOLUME VIII.

LÉON PAPIN-DUPONT.



THE LIFE  
OF  
LÉON PAPIN-DUPONT,  
*THE HOLY MAN OF TOURS.*

“Tibi dixit cor meum, exquisivit Te facies mea : Faciem Tuam,  
Domine, requiram.”—*Psalmus xxv.* 8.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES,  
GRANVILLE MANSIONS, ORCHARD STREET.

DUBLIN: M. H. GILL & SONS.

1882.

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## NOTICE.

To correct what the Editor has reason to believe is not an uncommon misapprehension, it is necessary to state that the present biography, like all the others in the series, is not a translation, although large use has been made, with the author's permission, of the Abbé Janvier's full and complete Life of the Holy Man.



TO  
The Most Holy Face  
OF  
OUR DIVINE REDEEMER,  
OUTRAGED WITH BLOWS AND SPITTLE  
IN  
HIS DOLOROUS PASSION,  
This Life  
OF  
ITS DEVOTED SERVANT AND ADORER  
IS PIOUSLY AND REVERENTLY  
DEDICATED.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE materials of this biography have been drawn from the admirable work of the Abbé Janvier, Dean of the Chapter of the Metropolitan Church of Tours and Priest of the Holy Face, which appeared in 1879, and of which an excellent abridgment, composed by the same author, was subsequently published in 1881. We have also consulted his later and shorter publication, giving an account of the Work of the Holy Face, of which he is now the Director, and of its development since M. Dupont's death, together with a brief historical notice of its founder.\* The Abbé Janvier knew M. Dupont intimately for many years, and has spared no pains or research to enrich his interesting biography with the records of its saintly subject preserved by others, whether as embodied in letters received from him or treasured up in their memories.

Reference has also been made to M. Léon Aub-

\* The following are the titles of the Abbé Janvier's works mentioned above:—*Vie de M. Dupont, mort à Tours en odeur de sainteté le 18 Mars, 1876, d'après ses écrits et autres documents authentiques.* 2 vols. 1879. Tours: A l'Oratoire de la Sainte-Face, Rue St. Etienne, 8. Paris: Lascher, Rue Bonaparte, 57. *M. Dupont et l'Œuvre de la Sainte-Face: Notice Historique.* Tours: A l'Oratoire de la Sainte-Face. 1882.

ineau's charming reminiscences. His work was published in 1878, and made no pretence of being a regular *Life of the Holy Man of Tours*, as the author states in his Preface. He was aware that the task of writing a full biography of M. Dupont had been intrusted by Monseigneur the Archbishop of Tours to the Abbé Janvier, and he did not assume to relate more than he had himself seen or heard ; in short, to add his personal testimony.

If it be asked why, with such a complete and excellent work before us as that of the Abbé Janvier, of which he has taken the trouble to give an abridgment in a moderate compass, we have preferred to reproduce his materials in our own way, instead of simply translating ? we can only recall the motive which led, in part, to the undertaking of the present biographical series, or, at least, to the resolution to exclude translations—namely, a persuasion that, as a general rule, there are certain diversities in matter of language, expression, and superficial turns of thought between different nationalities, which render such a course advisable where the object in view is to make a work suitable for popular reading. To be faithful, a translation must not be too free, and yet this literal fidelity will often injure, to a certain extent, the fidelity of the picture which it is intended to convey. Things must be told to Englishmen as Englishmen would tell them, and to Frenchmen similarly in their own fashion. This implies no real alteration in what is related ; on the contrary, it reflects it with more absolute truth. The plan adopted gives room also for the introduction of occasional remarks



applicable to our local needs and condition, and furnishes the opportunity of dealing with prevailing prejudices. The large extracts which the writer has permitted himself to make, with the full sanction of the revered author, from the Abbé Janvier's pages, are sufficient proof that he has often judged it best to adopt the precise words of the original Life, and these quotations would have been more numerous had space admitted of their insertion. But when it is remembered that the Abbé Janvier's work extends to two octavo volumes, each containing considerably above 500 pages, it will be evident that this was impossible. The writer will see cause to rejoice if his frequent mention of his authority, and his constant references to this treasury of information respecting the Holy Man of Tours, should conduce to a large circulation of the Abbé's work.

He can only add, that his sole desire, closely in accordance with that of the Director of the *Œuvre de la Sainte-Face*, is to promote the propagation of this devotion, which, without forestalling any future judgment of the Church on the revelations of Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre, seems like a gift of Divine love and compassion to our nineteenth century, as was that of the Sacred Heart to the seventeenth. Such a gift is designed for the whole Catholic Church. We are here, in England, a comparatively small body, struggling under many difficulties, and some, perhaps, there may be who, feeling deeply how great is the pressure of every day's hard work, would draw a distinction between essentials and what they may be disposed to regard as the luxuries

and ornaments of piety. But these special devotions, Heaven-inspired as we may well believe, are no mere luxuries and ornaments. They are mighty levers, which, according to the promise given to faith, have power to remove mountains. They imply also in their exercise one of those touching acts of love which we know from the Gospel, as well as from the revelations made to Saints, to be so acceptable to our dear Lord, and which, as such, may be expected to bring a rich blessing. The Holy Ghost, who dwells in and informs the Church, knows what is pleasing to the Heart of Jesus, and makes supplications in the Saints according to God. We cannot, therefore, throw ourselves with too much fervour into the practice of these devotions, confidently believing that they express the mind of the Spirit, and, if so, that they must have a more potent efficacy for converting sinners, sanctifying souls, and inflaming hearts with Divine charity, than our most diligent efforts could possess apart from this supernatural aid.

The Holy Man whose life we have undertaken to record must be regarded from two points of view: first, as the Providential instrument of propagating the work of reparation for the blasphemy and impiety which are provoking the anger of God against this generation, and, in particular, of establishing the devotion to the Holy Face, which is so intimately connected with that of reparation; secondly, as an example in his own person of the most exalted perfection. Living in and mixing with the world, he was not of the world, and yet this separa-

tion was not marked by any outward singularity of behaviour or austere reserve. He is thus placed more naturally within the sphere of imitation. Surpassing in degree what an ordinary Christian might feel able to propose to himself as his aim, the character of M. Dupont's sanctity furnishes a type the consideration of which cannot fail to be profitable to those whose vocation is to remain in the world, but whose aspirations rise above the mere desire of saving their souls. Now, we cannot but think the prevailing impression of all who read the Holy Man's life must be, that his sanctity never strove to accommodate itself to the tastes of the age or make any compromise with its requirements. The present age would keep the supernatural, if possible, at a respectful and decorous distance, and has a supreme dislike and contempt for anything like what it would deem to be a puerile exhibition of faith. And yet it has pleased Providence to raise up and set before us, in these days of cold unbelief and apologetic faith, a pattern layman, in whom the rules of the world in these matters are completely ignored and disregarded, and to set a seal of approval upon his conduct in this respect by a profusion of marvellous cures, performed as it were to order, and of which a parallel can scarcely be found since the time when St. Vincent Ferrer used to ring a bell at the hour when he worked his miracles. Much more, it need scarcely be said, can be learned from Léon Dupont's life, but this lesson lies on the surface, and may well be supposed to have a special purpose and significance—namely, to rebuke the pride and incredulity

of the age, and to foster in the hearts of the Church's children the humble and simple faith of primitive times.

It will interest many Catholics to learn that preliminary steps are being taken for the introduction of the cause of this great Christian. In the month of January of this current year, 1882, M. l'Abbé Buisson, one of the Vicars-General of the diocese of Tours, proceeded to Rome provided with a letter of recommendation from the Archbishop, which that prelate hoped might procure him the exceptional honour of a private interview with the Sovereign Pontiff. The Abbé Buisson accordingly consented to take charge of a copy of the Abbé Janvier's complete Life of M. Dupont, which, in this eventuality, he was to present to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, as a testimony of the author's profound veneration and his entire devotion to his sacred person. The Holy Father had already been pleased to accept the abridged edition, transmitted to him through the hands of the Abbé Pascal. He now further deigned to question the Vicar-General of Tours in detail concerning the Work of the Holy Face, and to send his blessing to all the priests who devote themselves to it. He, moreover, directed his private secretary, Mgr. Boccali, to address a letter to the Abbé Janvier, informing him of the satisfaction with which his Holiness had received the two volumes of the Life of M. Dupont, and transmitting to him his Apostolic benediction, which he heartily bestowed both on himself personally and on all who had solicited it through him.

But this was not the only happy result of the

Abbé Buisson's journey to Rome. Mgr. Colet, who greatly desired to be the first to set his hand to the introduction of M. Dupont's cause, had commissioned his Vicar-General to speak to the Holy Father on this deeply interesting subject. By his orders, a consistorial advocate has been chosen and nominated for the purpose of preparing materials for the process of diocesan inquest, which is the first necessary step in all causes of this kind, and the selected advocate has promised to employ the utmost attention and diligence in forwarding the business. The gratifying information here given is extracted, in substance, from the first number of the *Annales de la Sainte-Face*, which appeared in the June of this year, 1882. The writer says in conclusion—and we warmly share his desire and adopt his words—"May the friends of M. Dupont and the zelators of the Holy Face join with us in recommending to God in their prayers an affair of so much importance."

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In obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII. and other Sovereign Pontiffs, we declare that all the graces, revelations, and supernatural facts related in this volume have only a human authority, and that in all we have herein written respecting the life and virtues of Léon Papin-Dupont we submit ourselves without reserve to the infallible judgment of the Apostolic See, which alone has power and authority to pronounce as to whom rightly belong the character and title of Saint.

## IN MEMORIAM.

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THE Editor cannot let the present volume pass out of his hands without expressing his deep sense of the loss which the series has sustained in the death of the Reverend Father Knox, of the London Oratory, to whose judgment all the previous volumes were submitted in their progress through the press. He was not content with a mere cursory perusal, in order to ascertain that the pages contained nothing contrary to faith and morals. He gave his whole mind to the work. Although he abstained from making mere verbal corrections, and never interfered with legitimate freedom of opinion, on the other hand, he never omitted to remark on any expression which was wanting in accuracy or of dubious import; and often, when he dissented from any theological or quasi-theological statement, he would state his reasons at some length, and even adduce authorities in support of his conclusions.

The Lives being mostly of an interior rather than an exterior character, many points, not only of ascetical, but of mystical theology came frequently before his notice, and to these he gave his special and most careful attention. He had a very keen eye in detecting a shadow of error, and was possessed of great

precision of thought and solidity of judgment; and such, in effect, was the science and prudence which he brought to his task, that in no single instance has criticism been able to fasten on any censurable or even questionable statement or sentiment in any of the seven volumes which passed under his revision. For this happy result grateful acknowledgments are due to this pious and learned priest, in whom, it may be added, the Editor mourns the loss of a much esteemed and valued friend.—R. I. P.

CHELTENHAM,

*Michaelmas*, 1882.





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## CHAPTER I.

### THE EARLY YEARS OF LÉON DUPONT.

GRACE does not extinguish nature. This remark has been so often made that it might seem hardly worth while to repeat it; it is, however, forcibly suggested by the subject of the present biography, a man to whom the voice of his contemporaries has emphatically affixed the epithet of holy,—“The Holy Man of Tours.” To give that title authoritatively appertains to the Church alone, as we all know. “Did his virtues,” asks his biographer, the Abbé Janvier, who had been well acquainted with him for thirty-five years, “arrive at the heroic degree of sanctity? Was he truly a Thaumaturgus, as he was esteemed? Did he work the miracles attributed to him? I believe it. But it is not either for you or for me to decide this point. This decision belongs to the Church and to its Infallible Head.” This wonderful man, whose whole time was divided between untiring works of mercy and assiduous prayer, continued to live a simple secular life. He was neither priest nor religious, nor was he bound by any vows save those which bind all Christians, the vows of baptism. He may be said to

have never lost his special individuality, which was marked and striking. His genial nature, his frankness, openness, and cheerfulness both of disposition and of manner, bordering at times upon what might be styled a certain joviality, remained to the last the distinguishing characteristics of M. Dupont. He was a man of apt repartee, with a spice of humour and eccentricity in it, which often moved his hearers to laughter, but in which malice had never any part. This exterior, however, in which nature seemed to enjoy free and unrestricted play, veiled a marvellous interior work of grace, a work, the extent of which even intimate friends imperfectly realised.

The Abbé Janvier, who was a young man when he first became acquainted with him, says that, although he could not reckon himself among the closest of his intimates, nevertheless M. Dupont always treated him as a friend and had often given him touching proofs of esteem and confidence; so that, when he received what he considered a command from superiors to write the holy man's life, he imagined that his task would not be very arduous, and that, in order accurately to portray his subject, he would have but to recall his impressions and interrogate his recollections. But he found that he was mistaken, and that the figure he had undertaken to sketch had been but half known to him. As long as M. Dupont lived, most of his friends, in common with the Abbé Janvier, saw nothing but the exterior of his life: his great charity, his passionate love for Holy Scripture, together with that zeal for the faith and that ardent piety which many even judged to be excessive and partaking of enthusiasm; to which must be added the reputation of a wonder-worker, more or less contested by the

public at large, as is ever the case where it is question of the supernatural, but accorded to him freely by those who had the opportunity of witnessing the marvellous cures which he effected. No more than this was patent, and it was quite enough to excite high admiration; no more was generally suspected. But it was quite another thing when a large amount of manuscript documents was placed in the Abbé's hands, and when, in particular, he began to examine M. Dupont's private letters of various dates, numbering more than fifteen hundred, and the many fragments of writing thrown off by his pen, which helped to reveal the interior workings of his mind, or artlessly recorded some anecdote at once edifying and piquant, illustrative of his character. From these and from the study of a mass of other papers found in his room, which were all securely consigned to ecclesiastical custody, the proposed biographer began to descry hitherto unobserved features in the venerable figure; M. Dupont's personality gradually emerged, as he proceeded, luminous and distinct, and invested with a completeness and perfection of spiritual grandeur which it had never before worn in his eyes.

Evidently this holy man, like other contemplatives—for M. Dupont, in spite of his active life, was a man of exalted contemplation and closest union with God—had not allowed the public to behold his whole self. Living in the world, he had hidden himself from the world, and had succeeded in veiling from human observation half his soul, and that its most precious portion. But here his historian detects it. "In these confidential letters," he says, "flowing from the abundance of the heart, and written *currente calamo*, sometimes twelve or thirteen a-day, without his having

taken time to reperuse them, and utterly unsuspecting of the use which was later to be made of them, he pours himself forth, he reveals himself without intending to do so, he betrays himself; I see what he is before God and before his conscience." The Abbé Janvier could now read the enigma of a life so apparently complex and in many ways singular and strange, although so pure and irreproachable; he had his finger, as it were, on the link which united the two portions of this existence, outwardly so entirely occupied with his neighbour and with the poor, inwardly never losing sight of God and abiding habitually in His adorable presence. He could now understand the secret of the charm which accompanied his least words, the grace which seemed to have been poured upon his lips and to flow from his hands in those invocations pronounced and unctions performed by him before the venerated Picture of the Holy Face. He now felt deeply persuaded that he had before him a saintly figure of a most exceptional kind, perhaps unique in Catholic hagiology; a Christian living in the world, entirely a man of his day, a layman of the nineteenth century, and at the same time a devoted servant of God, worthy, by the childlike confidence and fervour of his faith and love, of the primitive ages of the Church; in short, he felt that he had made a discovery, which the instinct of the common people had made long before, for full often had he heard some of those simple folk exclaim, when speaking of M. Dupont, "Either that is a saint, or there is no such thing as a saint at all." That he died in the odour of sanctity is attested by the title "holy" which the Abbé affixed to his work; but the expression had already been used by higher authority, that of the Archbishop of



Tours, in the decree which transformed into a public chapel the private oratory of the venerated man; in employing which title it is scarcely necessary to add that there was no intention to forestal any future decision of the Holy See.

Léon Papin-Dupont was descended from a race of Breton gentlemen. His family seems in the 17th century to have emigrated to the Antilles in company with others from the same part of France, and claimed to be of noble extraction. Nicolas-Léon-Papin Dupont, father of the subject of this biography, was settled in Guadaloupe, where he was born, but he had married a rich creole of the island of Martinique. Mademoiselle Marie-Louise Gaigneron de Marolles, sprung also from an ancient and noble French family. The West Indian colonies of France suffered fearfully from the effects of the Revolution of 1793, and in order to escape from the sanguinary tyranny of the Convention, M. Papin-Dupont and many other settlers in Guadaloupe took the wise course of removing to Martinique, which had fallen into the possession of the English, under whose rule the island enjoyed peace and prosperity until the year 1802, when it was restored to France by the terms of the Treaty of Amiens. It was during the English domination that Léon was born. His parents were then living on their ample estate, which consisted of large sugar plantations adjoining the *bourg* of Lamentin, situated in the finest part of the island, and it was here that, on the 24th of January, 1797, this child of benediction first saw the light of day. He was named Léon after his father, and received simple baptism on the day of his birth, the ceremonies being deferred until the 6th of March, when they were performed in the parish church of St. Laurent.

His young mother, who is spoken of by those who knew her as having been possessed, not only of much personal grace and amiability, but also of the more solid qualities of heart and mind, was a good Christian, and early instilled into her son a love of the things of God. He lost his father when he was barely six years old, so that he and his brother Théobald, who was four years his junior, were left to the exclusive care of their widowed mother. A little anecdote has been recorded of those early days which, as it exemplifies the child's truthful character, must not be omitted. He used to attend a neighbouring school with other little boys of his age. They were one day romping in the absence of the master, when they were nearly caught in the fact by his sudden return, and had but just time to compose their faces and resume their seats when he entered the room. He had, however, heard the noise, and immediately began questioning them as to who had been the culprits. None would confess to having had any share in the disorderly proceeding, when little Léon Dupont stepped forward and frankly owned that he had been playing instead of attending to his lessons. The master made no reply, but, when recreation hour came, he bade the boys keep their places and said very gravely to Léon, "My little fellow, you do not deserve to remain here with these well-conducted boys, so go off to the play-ground." The rest were kept at their books, and received a sharp reprimand. Relating this incident gaily in his old age, Léon would greatly commend sincerity, in which, he said, he had moreover always found his account.

When he was older, his mother sent him to prosecute his studies in the United States, the disturbed condition of the Continent making her reluctant to

let him go to France ; whither, however, he was transferred two years later and placed at the College of Pontlevoy. Here he enjoyed the advantage of being near the Château of Chissay, which belonged to his maternal uncle, the Comte Gaigneron de Marolles. The College of Pontlevoy, once so flourishing, had been ruined by the Revolution, and, although now striving to raise its head again, was as yet in a most unsatisfactory state. It would seem almost incredible, but for M. Dupont's express testimony to the fact, that a priest who had doubly disgraced himself by taking the constitutional oath and marrying was its director. The faith and innocence of the young creole do not, however, appear to have suffered notably from the disorder prevalent in the college during the three years of his sojourn there. For his preservation from evil influences he was, doubtless, partly indebted to the good Christian training of his childhood, but there is reason to believe that his greatest safeguard was the fervour with which he made his first communion at twelve years of age, for he was heard in after life to rejoice at the recollection of the grace he then received. At that time, he said, I knew nothing about divine consolations, but I do know that I shed floods of tears, and that my heart was inundated with joy. It was the spiritual strength which he received in this first Eucharistic banquet, which we may well believe fortified this young boy, deprived as he was of parental guardianship, against the temptations which surrounded him.

God had, however, provided a second father for him in his uncle, the Comte Gaigneron de Marolles, an excellent man, who treated him like one of his own children. Léon, accompanied by his brother Théobald,

who had been sent over to join him, spent his vacations at the Château of Chissay, with his cousins and the occasional addition of other young relatives and friends. Among these was a young creole girl from Martinique, who, like himself, was receiving her education in France, and who was afterwards to become his wife. He was a favourite with the whole party. His gaiety, his good-nature, and desire, not so much to please, as to see every one else pleased, endeared him to all. Foremost in every sport, he was always ready, not only to make fun, but even to be made fun of, and play the fool in his own amusing way. His vivacity was accompanied with a certain tenaciousness of purpose, which at times was startling. When he was determined upon anything it was impossible to bend him. One day, when he had climbed the great iron gate at the entrance of the approach to the Château, his cousin, Alfred de Marolles, who had mounted on the other unclosed side and was swinging himself backwards and forwards, observing that Léon had placed his thumb just where the gate would fall, called out to him several times, "Léon, take your thumb away, or you will see I shall crush it." Whether or no it did not please the high-spirited youth to be dictated to by his companion, or from that species of bravado to which an exuberance of courage is apt to impel the young, Léon replied, "Just as you please, I shall not take it away." A moment after, the gate closed upon the hand of the obstinate boy, inflicting such serious damage to his thumb as to give it a deformed appearance for the rest of his life. Had not grace taken possession of his soul and moulded his character, directing all his natural faculties and dispositions to good and holy ends, we may imagine that Léon Dupont might have been

as conspicuous for boldness and pertinacity in evil as he was to become for dauntless Christian courage and heroic perseverance in holy undertakings.

His college studies were finished in 1815, the year when peace was definitively concluded, and the Island of Martinique, which had once more been occupied by the English, was finally restored to France. He and his brother now returned home for a short time on a visit to their mother. Left a widow at the age of twenty-two, with large estates to manage, she had thought it advisable to re-marry. Her second husband's name was Arnaud; he had property in her neighbourhood, and was a man of some position in the colony. The boys soon returned to France to complete their education and to prepare for their future professional career. Léon, who was destined for the magistracy, repaired to Paris for the purpose of pursuing his law studies, and took rooms at the Hotel d'Angleterre in the Rue Colombier, now the Rue Jacob, which was kept by a good and pious woman, to whom M. Dupont's biographer was indebted for many particulars relating to this early period of his life. He had an ample yearly allowance of ten thousand francs (£400), from his family, which enabled him, while pursuing his studies, to mix in good society and join in gay worldly amusements, to which his lively disposition rendered him far from averse. His birth, advantageous personal appearance, distinguished manners, and brilliant wit, all qualified him to move in the first circles, while the monarchical views which he had inherited served him as an additional passport to aristocratic houses.

To a youth of twenty-one, living in thorough independence of all family control or influence, the great

French capital must have been not without its perils ; and, indeed, there can be no doubt but that his early piety suffered an eclipse at this time, and that, although he did not actually renounce the practice of his religious duties, the affairs of his soul occupied but a slender portion of his attention. It could not well be otherwise, engrossed as he was by worldly frivolities, and engaged in a round of dissipating amusement. He lived to the full extent of his income, as may readily be conceived when we find that he must needs have his cabriolet and horse, all in the best style, in order that he might display himself and them in the Bois de Boulogne, and that he was an assiduous ball-goer, particularly fond of dancing, all which implied corresponding good dressing and many other expenses which his numerous invitations were sure to entail upon him. Add to this, Léon was always open-handed, and young men are seldom remarkable for economy. Nevertheless he always retained an unsullied reputation, and his life, though worldly, was not corrupt. Moreover, his society was by no means limited to his gay acquaintance of the Parisian *beau monde* ; he cultivated friendships of a more profitable character with men as remarkable for their talents as for their sound Christian principles ; and, in particular, he had the happiness of meeting again in Paris one of his old school-fellows, now a priest, the Abbé Frayssinous. By his eminent qualities of heart and intellect, this gifted young priest exercised the most salutary influence over his former companion, an influence which, along with other providential circumstances, was soon to bear good fruit ; for though, drawn away by his love of pleasure, Léon had become remiss in his attention to his religious duties, he was still secretly attracted to a

better way, and the voice of conscience often inwardly upbraided him for his vain and frivolous existence. True, it was to form but a brief episode in his life, yet he bitterly deplored it for the remainder of his days.

How his conversion was brought about we have now to relate. The possession of the cabriolet and horse rendered it necessary that he should also have what in those days was called a "jockey" by the French, who have now adopted the more accurate appellation of "groom" for a servant of that kind. A little Savoyard engaged in street-sweeping was selected by the concierge of his hôtel as likely to answer in this capacity. He was an intelligent and well-looking boy, so that when he had been cleaned up and accoutred suitably for his new office, his young master was well pleased with him. We are not told how he was instructed in its requirements, but this is not to our purpose. One day the boy was late in making his appearance. Questioned as to the reason of his unpunctuality, it appeared that a certain M. Bordier, in concert with some other pious young men, interested himself in the welfare of the little Savoyards, collecting them at appointed hours on stated days to teach them their catechism and prepare them for their first communion. The new "jockey," who was only twelve years old, was of the number, and his attendance that day had been the cause of his delay. Léon's interest was awakened, so, when the next meeting occurred, he went himself, and found M. Bordier surrounded by children who were attentively listening, and seemed to look up to him as a father. Much pleased with what he had seen, he sought this gentleman's acquaintance in order to thank him for the care he was bestowing on the



spiritual welfare of his servant. Whether on this first or on a subsequent visit, the frank and joyous young man, whose unreserved nature led him to talk of what was uppermost, gave M. Bordier, in his lively way, an account of an excursion he had recently made to Montmorency, a frequent resort of the Parisians of those days, as it may possibly be still, where the holiday-seekers would wander at pleasure on donkeys among the pretty paths by which the woods were intersected. A sudden storm had overtaken the party, and, although it sent them back drenched to the skin, it had created much fun and merriment. Léon laughed at the mere recollection. But where was M. Bordier at the time of this deluge, for he did not seem to have noticed it? "I must have been at Vespers," was the reply. "How so?" rejoined Léon, "it was not a Sunday." "No, it was a Thursday, the feast of the Ascension."\*

Léon was struck to the heart and confounded. He wished to be a Christian, and to appear to be a Christian, and here he was detected in having actually ignored one of the Church's greatest festivals. Absence from Vespers would, it is true, have been excusable, but he had plainly not fulfilled his obligation of attending Mass; in short, he had forgotten all about it. His question had betrayed him. It was a salutary stroke, and the more so probably because he had

\* Although we have in general followed the Abbé Janvier, as our authority, we have preferred M. Léon Aubineau's account of this incident. The former says that the day in question was one of the secondary feasts of our Lady, but M. Aubineau's statement seems the most probable, as better accounting for the intense shame experienced by young Dupont. He might feel very sorry at having overlooked a day of devotion to our Lady, but to have forgotten a great festival of obligation was a much more serious matter, and argued something more than a slip of memory.



thus exposed himself. Not but that his conscience would have any way reproached him had he recalled to mind his culpable neglect. But to see himself suddenly in the light in which he felt he must be regarded by a really practical Christian must doubtless have intensified that self-reproach, by bringing home to him more vividly the nature of the life which he was leading. So at least we may presume, for such is human nature. The change wrought in him may be called a transformation; for God, and not the world, was now his end and aim. M. Bordier, with whom he contracted a fast and life-long friendship, at his request recommended him a confessor, and he began at once, with all the heartiness and energy of his character, to interest himself in the charitable work of the little sweepers, an interest which he maintained through life.

This work had been established for 200 years. The Father who directed it during the days of the Revolution, was the Abbé de Salignac de Fénelon, who, notwithstanding his fourscore years and the supplications and tears of his poor children, was condemned to the guillotine by the merciless Revolutionary Tribunal, in 1794. At the beginning of this century, the work was reorganised, and devout laymen were associated with it; but it was affiliated to an institution of much more importance and far wider scope, a Congregation of our Lady, which was doing incalculable good amongst a number of Parisian youths. It was the counterpart of those numerous institutions, of the same character, which had been directed by the Jesuits until the time of their expulsion in 1762. Its founder, the Péré Delpuits, not having taken his final vows at that date, was able to remain on in Paris, where he dedicated his time to giving retreats both to ecclesiastics and to

pious laymen, but particularly to the youths studying in different houses of education. Interrupted by the Revolution, when he had to suffer, first imprisonment, then exile, he returned when the days of terror were past, to resume his holy labours, and conceived the project, which he was able to initiate in 1801, of establishing a Congregation similar, as we have said, to those which his Order was wont to have in all its colleges, and which had been productive of so much good. The work had a wonderful development, and the Abbé Janvier remarks that it might pass for a kind of prodigy when the epoch at which it was undertaken is considered, an epoch of disorder, license, and impiety, when priests were daily harassed by vexatious laws, and a Voltairian education left students in ignorance of their most sacred duties. In the midst of this mass of corruption, M. Delpuits had known how to discern and attract those young men whom the spirit of the age had not perverted. Under his guidance, these youths not only led good Christian lives, but exercised a sort of Apostleship amongst their companions and also amongst the poor. Some even of the least religious schools furnished a considerable number of recruits to this zealous band, and the highest classes of society contributed members to its ranks.

M. Delpuits was dead at the time when M. Dupont joined the Congregation, but his work had been successfully carried on in spite of temporary obstacles. Its immediate and principal object was to fortify its members, most of them young at the period of their admission, against the dangers to faith and morals with which they were surrounded ; but it was natural that persons thus associated in the spirit of faith should be led to the exercise of active zeal and charity. Works

of this character were in full operation at that time. They were conducted by a distinct society, called the "Society of Good Works," which found its recruits chiefly in the Congregation, and was sub-divided again into special associations having a variety of objects. There was the work of the prisons, that of the hospitals, that of the little Savoyards, already mentioned, and others besides. Léon Dupont, who never took up anything by halves, threw himself with all the enthusiasm of his ardent nature into the new career which was opened before him. The love of virtue, Christian virtue of the genuine stamp, gained full possession of his soul, his faith struck deep roots, and he rapidly acquired, not the taste only, but the highest aptitude, for every work of mercy. M. Ronsin, who was the director of the Congregation at this time, was a very holy man, remarkable for the ardour with which, during his whole life, he strove to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, convinced that it was the efficacious remedy for all the evils of society, and that sooner or later it would be the salvation of France. It was probably from this good priest that M. Dupont imbibed that love of the Sacred Heart which so eminently distinguished him. This holy man, who faithfully laboured in the Congregation for thirteen years, survived its destruction for sixteen. In 1828 he retired from its direction to appease the clamour raised against it on account of its connection with the Society of Jesus; but two years later it succumbed, the victim of anti-Christian animosity, which affected to see in it a political combination, although the very mention of any question of that nature had always been rigorously excluded from its meetings, which had a purely religious and charitable object.

## CHAPTER II.

## LÉON DUPONT'S NEW LIFE.

LÉON'S heart was now wholly given to God, although he did not immediately break externally with the world. It was easy, however, to foresee that his generous soul would stop short at no sacrifices. He could not long succeed in combining two such opposite modes of life as those of a votary of the world and of a zealous Congregationist, and there could be no doubt as to his ultimate choice, if it were question of renouncing one of the two, for it was implied in that which he had already made. But all with him was to come freely and naturally rather than by rule and effort. In the meantime he fulfilled all his Christian obligations with an openness which in those days must have called for some boldness in a young man still holding his place as a fashionable member of a society careless and indifferent to religion, even when it did not regard it with scorn. But Léon was incapable of blushing for what he so ardently loved. He gloried in his faith, and, in company with some other zealous youths of the Congregation, would take a positive pleasure in exposing himself to ridicule, in order to manifest it before a godless generation. With this object they would repair on Fridays to some frequented restaurant and order aloud a meagre dinner, that all present might know that they, at least, were Christians, and not ashamed of the name. How unusual it was at that period in France for a young man of the world to brave human respect by fulfilling his

religious obligations is exemplified by the following incident. Léon, having occasion to pass a Sunday at Nantes, spoke to one of the parish priests, expressing his wish to go to confession and communion. The Abbé, thus accosted by a handsome young man, who evidently belonged to the gay Parisian world, could not believe that his interlocutor was in earnest, and, fearful of being a party to some irreverent jest, he hesitated to receive him to confession. M. Dupont, guessing from his embarrassed manner what was in his thoughts, hastened to tell him that he was a Congregationist and made a practice of approaching the sacraments every week.

Léon's generous charity led before long to his sacrificing some of those elegances of life which were essential to the retention of his position in the gay world. We will relate the occasion of this renouncement, as recorded by a Parisian bookseller, M. Vrayet de Surey, who witnessed it. He happened to be present at a meeting of creditors, called together to declare the insolvency of a poor stationer, a father of a family, who had been obliged to suspend payment for want of 1500 francs. M. Dupont accidentally entered the shop where this transaction was in progress and, observing the look of care and anxiety on the faces of its occupants, inquired the cause. No sooner had he understood the state of things than, waving his hand towards the door, he said, "Take my horse and tilbury, and sell them to pay the debt." And the horse, adds the narrator, was certainly a very fine horse, for M. Dupont was one of the fashionables of the day. We may imagine the sensation produced by this spontaneous act of charity. "I should not be surprised," observes M. Vrayet de Surey, "if the sanctity of M. Dupont

dated from that hour." By nature, it is true, Léon was munificent, and never took long to reflect where it was question of an unselfish act of kindness ; nevertheless, it would not be fair, we think, to rank this action as simply the noble impulse of a warm and generous heart. For it involved a certain revolution in his mode of life ; he must have seen this at a glance, and, if he unhesitatingly made so great a sacrifice, it must have been from a movement of grace, an impulse of the Holy Spirit, "who breatheth where He will," rather than from mere natural liberality. Not but that it is evident that sudden resolves were congenial to Léon's disposition, and nature had doubtless, therefore, her due share in the act prompted by a higher influence ; for the Spirit of God accommodates Itself to our nature, moulding and guiding but not superseding it, so that, while It will lead one soul of tardy action gradually and almost insensibly along the path divinely traced for it, to another It will suggest rapid advances, like bounds and leaps, in the way of perfection.

One great test of the origin of deeds like that just recorded, is to be found in their results. The magnanimous acts of nature are capricious, and lead to nothing stable. Those inspired by the Heavenly Guide may be marked as epochs and fresh starting-points in a man's life. So it was with Léon. By this sacrifice he broke, in a great measure, with the seductions of a fashionable life, though, as we shall find, he still retained his taste for society and for many of its lively amusements. But grace was doing its work, and by degrees transforming his whole character. The vivacity of his temperament, however, was apt to betray him into faults of surprise. His

good landlady, Mme. Contour, has related how, upon such occasions, his repentance came so swiftly, and was so open and sincere, that it was impossible not to feel but that it more than made amends for the offence. One day he wanted to change a note of 1000 francs for some payment he was about to make, but he could not find it anywhere, and what added to his excitement was that he was in a hurry to keep his appointment. Impatient and irritated, he turned on his servant, the only person who knew of the note, and charged him with having purloined it. The man turned deadly pale, but said nothing. Mme. Contour, who had come to aid in the search, now begged M. Dupont to be calm, and, advancing the sum which he needed, asked for his keys that she might carefully examine every place in which it might possibly be. The accused accompanied his master. In his absence she succeeded in discovering the missing note, which had become jammed in the back of a drawer full of papers. When she handed it to Léon on his return, he threw himself on his knees at his servant's feet, sobbing and imploring his forgiveness in the humblest terms. Nor did he think he could do enough to compensate the man for his injurious suspicion. Such heroic acts of penitence must greatly disconcert the devil. Indeed, we cannot imagine a more discouraging subject of temptation to the enemy of souls than was Léon Dupont, even in his imperfect beginnings. We shall find him in after life making great game of Satan.

One more anecdote belonging to this period may be inserted here, because it is as characteristic of Léon's sincerity at two or three-and-twenty as was the example of his boyish candour already narrated. While going through his course of law he had a private tutor, and



took occasion to dispense himself from attendance at the public lectures. However, when the time for examination arrived, it was necessary to have a certain number of certificates of his presence at these instructions, as well as of his proficiency. What was he to do? It was a very simple matter with him. He went straight to the professor, to whom he was a perfect stranger, and explained that the object of his visit was to obtain the needful testimonials. Of course, questions were asked, and Léon at once frankly avowed that he had not attended one of the professor's lectures, and, indeed, had never had the honour of seeing him before. So far, however, from reproving him, the professor expressed warm admiration of his truthfulness, so rare among the students, who, even when habitually shirking attendance, would stoutly assert that they had been constantly present. He concluded by bidding the young man attend two or three times, for, seeing that he had received private tuition, he felt perfectly satisfied that he was sufficiently prepared, and would, after putting a few questions, grant him the necessary certificates. Once again had Léon Dupont reason to hold that honesty is the best policy.

During the latter portion of his stay at Paris he became, through a fortuitous circumstance which does him credit, and shows the nature of the good works in which, during those early days, he was engaged, acquainted with Mme. Barat, foundress of the Nuns of the Sacré Cœur, with whom he continued to maintain relations through life. No friendship, indeed, of this kind was ever by him lost sight of or neglected. In 1821 he left France and returned to his mother. He was then twenty-four years of age. He had successfully passed through his legal studies, and, having



received an appointment at the Cour Royale at Martinique, was starting with good prospects. Nor did he dislike his profession, but he had felt another attraction, and, before quitting Paris, had expressed a desire to enter the Seminary of St. Sulpice; this wish, however, was overruled by his family and friends. Still he had not abandoned the idea of embracing the ecclesiastical state, but Mme. d'Arnaud, it is believed, strenuously opposed it, particularly after the death of her younger son in 1826. She had set her heart on Léon's marrying, and it was said at the time that his course was finally decided by accidentally overhearing his mother passionately exclaiming, "My God, wilt Thou indeed condemn me never to have any grandchildren!" Both the biographers of M. Dupont consider this story as rather apocryphal, being hardly conformable with his character, which was singularly firm where duty was in question, and which would never have suffered even filial affection to interfere with obedience to a divine call. M. Léon Aubineau, in particular, who was well acquainted with both mother and son in after life, says he fails to recognise either of them in this anecdote. Mme. d'Arnaud, he thinks, whatever might be her personal feelings, would never have permitted herself to oppose her son's leanings and aspirations to a higher life further than was allowable in order to test their solidity. For, after all, an attraction does not necessarily prove a vocation, and, if Léon thought well to follow the leadings of Providence in his choice of a state of life, rather than his attraction, this affords strong presumptive proof that his was not a genuine vocation; a view confirmed by the fact that when subsequently, in mature life, he seriously examined before God

When he had a call to the priesthood, he arrived at the same conclusion as in his youth.

In Martinique he followed a mode of life similar to that which he had adopted in Paris ; that is, his time was divided between works of zeal and charity and social amusements. Adroit in all bodily exercises, he was a lover of field-sports, took a lively interest in races, and continued to be extremely fond of dancing. Whatever Léon did, he did it with zest and spirit, so that it might have appeared as if there were in him two men of opposite tastes and tempers, each as energetic as the other, or that his heart was equally shared by God and the world, a thing which we know to be impossible, since no man can serve two masters. It is true that there may exist a temporary state of conflict in which God and the world alternately prevail, but we fail to observe traces of any such struggle in Léon's mind, and are rather disposed to regard him as acting in perfect good faith, not having perhaps, as yet, sufficient light to perceive the incompatibility of so large an indulgence in secular amusements with a life wholly given to God, or not having as yet drunk so deeply of that fount of divine love which quenches every other thirst in the soul as to have lost the relish which his genial nature took in many worldly pleasures. In the midst of these it is evident that his behaviour was blameless and innocent ; nevertheless, in after years, when called interiorly to something higher, he reproached himself with this inconsistent episode in his life ; from which we may conclude that he considered that he had exceeded the limits of moderate recreation at that period in his intercourse with society. But it does not follow that he was at the time conscious of any inconsistency, neither does

it follow that there was any question as to which had the mastery of his heart, God or the world. Allowance must be made for the young man's impulsive nature, which did not permit him to do anything languidly. How impulsive that nature was, is proved by his behaviour on an occasion which called forth his zeal for God's honour. One Sunday at High Mass in the parish church of Lamentin, a coloured woman, dressed in all her holiday finery, was playing off her coquettish airs and graces to attract the attention of her neighbours. At last Léon could no longer restrain his indignation, and during the Preface, when it was the custom at Martinique to stand, the offender being within reach, he stretched out his arm and administered to her a sound box on the ear, which kept her quiet during the remainder of the Mass. Another instance of his impetuosity, what some would call his intolerant temper, was displayed not long after his return from France, when sentiments which, next to his religious feelings, had a sacred character in his eyes, were one day outraged in his presence. A visitor at his mother's house indulged in some violent invectives against the martyred Louis XVI., who was held by M. Dupont's family in the highest veneration. Léon lost his patience, and, rising from his chair, "Sir," he said, addressing the gentleman, "here is your hat," which he unceremoniously handed to him, and thus dismissed him without another word. This act was the more remarkable because of his habitual courtesy, which in Paris had earned for him the nickname of the "Marquis des Égards," a term not easy to render into English, but significant of that delicate consideration and perfect tact which marked his behaviour. The unsparing, we might call it the uncal-

culating, liberality which marked all Léon's acts of charity was conspicuous in him from the first; we have seen an example of this in the sale of his horse and carriage. Another point is worthy of notice, that a religious and moral aim was always uppermost in his thoughts. Thus we find him, soon after his return to Martinique, constituting himself as the guardian and tutor of a little orphan girl for whom he had stood sponsor. He had spontaneously offered himself to fill the spiritual relationship with the view of preventing the choice of a person who, although eligible in a pecuniary point of view, promised ill in the religious, intending to have her brought up by the nuns of Madame Barat at the Sacré Cœur. When she attained her seventh year he sent her to France in a vessel laden with barrels of sugar. She is still living, and well remembers M. Dupont's kindness in taking her for a few days to his house before embarkation, and finally seeing her on board. When mounting the ship's side she recollects laying hold of her godfather's spurs, an awkward equipment for such an occasion, to save herself from falling. She had more and greater kindness to acknowledge later, as will be noticed hereafter.

The death of his brother Théobald, in the year 1826, was a severe blow to Léon's affectionate heart; it probably decided him to marry, which he knew would be the best consolation he could offer to his sorrowing mother. Accordingly, a few months later, after taking the advice of a worthy ecclesiastic, his friend, he asked and obtained Mme. d'Arnaud's sanction to solicit the hand of Mdle. d'Audiffredi, a young lady with whom he had been long acquainted; she, like himself, having been sent to France for her educa-

ion, where, as already stated, she spent her holidays at M. de. Marolle's château. She was now in her twenty-fourth year, Léon Dupont being thirty. She was described as good and amiable, but of delicate health. They were married on the 9th of May, 1827. Five years after their union a daughter was born to them, who received in baptism the name of Marie-Caroline-Henriette. The rite was administered immediately after the birth of the infant, but the solemnities were deferred for eight months, and many friends were invited on the occasion. A presentiment of her approaching end seems to have possessed the young mother. Having disappeared from the festive circle, her husband for some time sought her in vain, and at last found her in retirement weeping. Questioned as to the cause of her tears, she replied that she should not live to bring up that dear child, for that her life was near its close; and, in fact, she died very soon after. Although of a fragile constitution, no one considered her to be ill, when she asked for a priest, desiring, as she said, to receive the last sacraments. The priest refused to comply with her request, seeing that her indisposition was insufficient to warrant such a course. "You will not have time to return," she said. And so it came to pass; for it was another priest, hastily summoned, who administered to her the last rites of the Church. Léon, who dearly loved his wife, was deeply afflicted by this loss, and the illness which his grief brought on attacked his eyes, so that it was feared he might possibly lose his sight. But his faith triumphed over this natural sorrow, and, accepting the severe trial with resignation, he resolved henceforth to live more entirely for God, dividing his

time between the care of his child and those good works to which his zeal always impelled him.

Two years later he decided to leave Martinique, and seek in France a more temperate climate for himself as well as for his little girl, whose delicate health was a cause of uneasiness to him. Accordingly, in the spring of 1834, he sailed for Bordeaux, accompanied by his mother, who had lost her husband five years previously, his negro Alfred, and a young mulatto, called Adèle, who was to serve him faithfully through life, and after his death contribute her testimony to his exalted virtues. His purpose was to establish himself at Tours. Amongst the various motives which influenced him in his choice was the wish expressed by his wife on her deathbed, that he would confide the education of Henriette to no one except the Superioress of the Ursulines at Tours. It was there she had herself been reared, and she had retained a most filial love and respect for her venerable mistress, Mme. de Lignac. M. Dupont's abode at Tours was not that which he has for ever rendered famous. It was selected on account of the vicinity of the Ursuline school, and that of his friend Dr. Bretonneau, who was one of his attractions to Tours; but he vacated it two years later, being compelled to do so by alterations in the street, and hired a house in the Rue St. Etienne, which he finally purchased, and inhabited till his death. Having fully determined to fix himself in France, he resigned his appointment in Martinique a year after his departure from the island. He had no intention of continuing the practice of his profession, nor did his circumstances require that he should do so, for he had quite sufficient means. He had inherited his father's fortune, and this, together with his mother's, which was consider-

able, made them the joint possessors of eight hundred thousand francs (£32,000).

It was now that the idea of a vocation to the priesthood again occurred to him. He asked himself if the moment had not come for him to realise it, and, leaving his child in the care of his excellent mother, abandon the world that he might serve God more exclusively in the sacerdotal state. He opened his mind on the subject to Mme. de Lignac, of whose spiritual insight he had a high esteem, and begged her to recommend him a confessor. She sent him to M. Jolif de Colombier, a curé of the cathedral, with whom he was more than satisfied, and whom he continued to consult as his director.\* Mme. de Lignac and the confessor were both agreed, previously to any mutual communication, that it was not advisable that M. Dupont should leave the secular state. They thought that he would be able to do more good and exercise more influence by remaining in the world. As his desire to change his state of life seems to have been grounded mainly on the idea that he might serve God more perfectly as a priest, and not on one of those attractions which, when persistent, strongly indicate a personal call from above, a call which arguments derived from probable usefulness would be powerless to silence, it is not surprising to find him yielding to the united opinion of the two devoted servants of God whom he had separately consulted, and acquiescing in the justice of their decision. He was to be always a simple layman—such, he was now persuaded, was the

\* M. Jolif de Colombier's bad health and numerous occupations led M. Dupont to apply frequently to M. Pasquier, to whom he ended by committing the entire care of his conscience. He used to see him almost daily.



## M. DUPONT.

of God in his regard. But, in giving up his aspirations after a more perfect state, M. Dupont did not abate anything of his aspirations after perfection. He had a mission, of which he had no doubt the secret instinct, although his humility alone would have hindered him from distinctly recognising it. Providence was about to offer him to society as the model and type of Christians of his condition, a perfect exemplar of those virtuous laymen whom the circumstances of our times call to play so important and so influential a part in the service of religion and in the defence of the Church. His whole life will show how fully he accomplished this mission.

From the outset he boldly manifested himself such as he was, without reserve and on all occasions. The attitude which he assumed made quite a sensation in the place, for it is difficult to realise the bondage in which human respect held all classes at that time. Few persons dared to perform publicly their religious duties, so that those who still desired to acquit themselves of their obligations would creep to church secretly, as if it were a disgrace to acknowledge themselves to be Christians in real earnest. These were the first years of Louis Phillipe's reign, a most disastrous period for religion in France. Free-thought was in the ascendancy, and it had become the fashion openly to insult priests and make a jest of the ceremonies of Holy Church. In a provincial town like Tours, a gentleman such as M. Dupont, well connected, in easy circumstances, and with the perfect manners of the best society, is sure to attract attention. To see a man of this class undisguisedly devout, attending all the offices of the Church, often serving Mass in the cathedral and in other churches, following the priest



when carrying the Viaticum to the dying, and, taper in hand, joining in processions in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, of our Lady, and of the Sacred Heart, was not a novelty alone, but an event. Add to this, that he spoke freely and fervently of God and of religion before no matter who; yet there was such an unaffected grace, such a charming frankness, and so much true wisdom and discretion in all he said, that even those who taxed him with exaggeration were fain to admire in spite of themselves. Occasionally, however, the sight of any public scandal would move him to one of those sudden acts of vigour of which we have seen him capable, but to which the good people of Tours were quite unused. Thus, observing one day an indecent picture at a shop door, he kicked his foot through it, paying the owner its value, and making him promise that for the future no such nudities should be exposed to the public eye. His whole behaviour, in short, was a courageous protest against the weakness and cowardly compliance of a certain class of men, who in their hearts loved and respected religion, but dared neither to practise it nor to pay it any external honour. He was seen almost daily at communion, either in the cathedral or in one of the other churches to which his devotion led him, and this was remarkable in a layman in those times, when frequent communion was little practised even by pious women. But if his conduct caused astonishment to others, much more was this astonishment matter of surprise to himself. Communion was in his eyes so supremely desirable; the very sight of the altar and of the tabernacle would send a thrill of joy through his whole frame, a joy which would sometimes betray itself in words betokening the ardour of his faith and love. One day, a

priest belonging to the cathedral found him standing alone, as it were in contemplation, a few steps from one of the side chapels where communion was given at some of the early Masses. Seeing him pass, M. Dupont, with whom he was well acquainted, stopped him and, pointing to the communion cloth hanging on the rails, whispered in a tone expressive of faith and admiration, which the young ecclesiastic never forgot, "How good God is ! See, the cloth is spread, the feast is prepared, the Master expects His guests, for all are invited. No one is excluded or rejected. Yes, God is good ! Which of us, which among the great ones of the earth, is to be found who at all hours holds his table ready prepared for all who present themselves ? How is it that they do not come ?" He exhorted all over whom he had any influence to communicate often, as his letters prove ; but he met with opposition, not from the worldly alone, but where one might least have expected it, from some of the priests themselves, who would have desired more reserve in running counter to received practice. For it appears that something of the spirit of Jansenism still survived in France, helping, in addition to the ordinary causes of neglect, to keep men deliberately at a distance from the sacraments.

This was probably one of M. Dupont's chief motives for publishing, in the year 1839, a book entitled, "*La Foi raffermie et la Piété ranimée dans le Mystère de l'Eucharistie, par un ancien magistrat ;*" he did not affix his name. It was considered to be full of science as well as of unction, for M. Dupont's piety was as enlightened as it was fervent. He was well grounded in theology, and had studied the best ascetical writers. He had begun to say Office ever since he fixed himself at

hours, and he observed as much exactness in this matter as if he had been a priest, an effort the more meritorious as no obligation bound him to a practice which must often have involved no small amount of self-sacrifice. His devotion to the Breviary shows how thoroughly he was imbued with the Church's spirit, which this daily exercise must again have largely helped to nourish and maintain. Had he not drunk so deeply at the fountain-head we may venture to surmise that his lay Apostolate would have lacked one of its main sources of fruitfulness; for, if any man would speak effectively for God, he must speak, not his own words and ideas, but the language and the thoughts of the Spirit and of the Bride.

These pious practices did not interfere with his social relations. He mixed a good deal with persons of his own class, invited friends to his house, and conversed freely with them. He is, indeed, described at this period as talking much, but lest any should thence be led hastily to conclude that he had not in him as yet the first rudiments of sanctity, it is well to add that his conversation was never trivial, or for talking sake. He was a man of one aim, and that aim was to serve God, directly or indirectly. If his wit and the sprightliness of his repartees amused, they also left his hearers edified. There was nothing of loquacity in him, and if, later on, his conversation was to have a more distinctly supernatural and even mystical turn, this was at a time when he had won a certain position for himself which rendered congruous what might now have been premature; premature for himself no less than for his audience.

Two families with whom ties of friendship and kinship united him, those of De Beauchamp and De Marolles,

lived at no great distance from Tours. M. de Beauchamp was his uncle, and every year Mme. d'Arnaud took her grandchild to spend a few months at his country place of Gringuenières. M. Dupont usually accompanied them, but did not remain. During his brief stay he would wander by himself amongst the neighbouring woods, or make pilgrimages to sanctuaries in the vicinity. Solesme was only four leagues distant, and he used often to visit there the illustrious Benedictine, Dom Guéranger. Time and circumstances only served to knit more strongly the intimacy then begun between them. The chapel of Notre Dame des Chênes was about the same distance as Solesme. Thither he would frequently repair very early in the morning, and return, always on foot and still fasting, to join the family breakfast. When he visited his other uncle at Chissay he was easily led away by his old love of riding and hunting to join in such exercises ; but in his heart he reproached himself for doing what, though in itself harmless, he esteemed an idle diversion, profitless for salvation. "I do nothing for God," he would exclaim ; and day by day he felt himself more powerfully drawn to a life of greater austerity and of higher perfection.

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## CHAPTER III.

## THE PILGRIM SEEKING THE OLD WAYS.

WE are coming to one of those fresh starting-points in the life of Léon Dupont to which we have already alluded, starting-points from which he made rapid bounds forward in the way of perfection. It was in the summer of 1837 that, visiting Chissay with his mother and daughter, three days after his arrival he received an interior light which revealed to him the necessity of henceforth entering on the paths of true Christian mortification. The anniversary of that day of grace and illumination, the 22d of July, he celebrated every year in the joy of his soul. We find him long after, when re-writing his will, signing it on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, the 26th anniversary of the day, when, as he said, he understood the necessity of living a life of penance. Recalling particulars he added, "It was shortly after receiving Holy Communion at the Château of Chissay, where I was staying with my mother and daughter, in 1837, at the sight of a little picture of St. Teresa." He also mentions that he received a similar grace a little later, when, as he was reading the Life of that great saint, he met with this thought: "I declare that I never began to comprehend the things of salvation until the day when I determined to have no longer any regard for my body." He regretted not having followed this light with more faith and courage. This humble regret was expressed in the year 1863. It is remarkable that he bequeathed to the Carmelites a little old faded print of St. Teresa,

on the other side of which he had written the date to which he always looked back as marking his first commencement of a more perfect life: "July 22d, 1837. St. Magdalen, three days after my arrival at Chissay. *Dicite justo quoniam bene* (Isaias iii. 10). St. Peter of Alcantara." This print was, no doubt, the same which had made so lively an impression on him, and which he would seem to have kept about his person. The addition of St. Peter of Alcantara's name can be easily understood. It will be remembered that this great Franciscan appeared to St. Teresa, and said, "O happy penance which has merited for me so much glory!" and the Saint of Avila, speaking of her holy friend, said, "Our Lord told me one day that He would grant all that was asked of Him through the intercession of His servant." These two facts are recorded in the Breviary, with which we have seen that M. Dupont was so familiar.

His close relations with the Carmel began soon after his arrival at Tours. Wandering through the town one day, and visiting some of its chapels, he entered into that of the Carmelites, where his attention was arrested by a painting of the Annunciation over the High Altar. After praying some time, he asked to see the Prioress, Mother Marie of the Incarnation, and having acquainted her with the impression produced upon him by this painting, learned that it was one of their most valued treasures. After the spoliation of their convent in the year 1793, when it was made a dépôt for merchandise, this picture, having, strange to say, been apparently overlooked, remained hanging on the wall. The proprietor was about to sell the dépôt for theatrical purposes, when one of his agents, who had no more religion than himself, observed that the picture was wet,

although the wall itself was perfectly dry. Curious to ascertain the cause, he took a ladder, and, having mounted, was dismayed to find that two little streams of tears were welling from the Blessed Virgin's eyes and descending to her robe, the blue of which was tarnished by them. Whether this marvel created alarm even in unbelieving hearts, who can say? but the negotiation was broken off, and the sale was not effected; after which the robe recovered its former freshness. Touched with these details, M. Dupont from that moment conceived the highest veneration for the chapel and its miraculous picture. His devotion to the mystery of the Incarnation, to which the Carmelite convent was dedicated, as well as to the great Archangel who was its ambassador, was at the same time much increased. When the Carmelites moved to the Rue des Ursulines, the precious picture was placed in their new chapel, where it may still be seen over the High Altar. M. Dupont's veneration for it continued through life, and in his last illness he had his bed turned so that he could see the rose window of the chapel, saying that it was his consolation. He seemed, indeed, to behold it with the eyes of his soul, for, a few days before his death, he said to his faithful Adèle, "How brilliant the Carmel is! It is resplendent with rubies and emeralds!" The Carmelite nuns did not fail to observe that his death occurred on a Saturday, the day dedicated to Mary, and on the 18th of March, which is the festival of the glorious Archangel whom he had so greatly honoured. M. Dupont's connection with the Carmel, to which so many ties were to bind him, may be dated from that casual visit. Into the spirit of the Order he fervently entered. We may call that spirit especially the spirit of reparation, a longing



for which was naturally excited in all pious souls by the deplorable state of religion in France at that period, and in none more ardently than in that of Léon Dupont.

Returning from the colonies, he found those Catholic works of charity and piety which, since the Restoration, had been struggling into activity, and in which he had participated in early youth, all but annihilated by the Revolution of 1830. A few timid attempts were being made to revive these institutions, but the current set strongly against them, and the *bourgeois* Liberal spirit triumphed everywhere. It had seated itself on the throne of St. Louis, as M. Léon Aubineau says, and it inspired the administration of Government in all its various ramifications. The Government itself professed no religion, and the municipalities closely reflected it in the attitude they assumed. We know well what it means to profess no religion, and to affect to tolerate all religions. It means animosity to the only true religion. This animosity always manifests itself the most bitterly against the religious Orders. The municipalities were their sworn foes. Monks were to them intolerable. Sisters of Charity might be permitted to devote their services to the sick in the hospitals, and to the poor, but everywhere they were denied the liberty of disposing of the alms which were confided to them by charitable persons. The University was all-powerful, and was a training-school of infidelity to the youth of France. Never, perhaps, had the Church seemed so helpless in the eyes of the world, never so deprived of the means of revival. Needless to say what a change a few years were to bring about, and how those who now mourned over the ruins of the past were to see almost all the old



religious Confraternities and Congregations re-established, with the addition of a multitude of new ones. True, the conflict still continues, and even waxes fiercer, but everywhere the army of the Church has been rallied and organised, and every one knows that she is alive and strong, ready to do battle with all the powers of the world and of Hell.

Some might have doubted this in 1834, when M. Dupont took up his residence at Tours. There was still a considerable number of Congregations of women in the town, but only one very small Community of men, comprising three or four Priests of the Mission, who had devoted themselves to the work of the ministry in country places. A few pious women, known as Dames de la Miséricorde, occupied themselves actively among the poor, and helped the Sisters of Charity. As for the laity generally, they kept aloof from all works of this kind, and if, as, indeed, was happily the case, there were men among them who had personally kept their faith, there was no united action for any charitable or religious purpose. Such was the scene which Léon Dupont was called to contemplate. But it was impossible to discourage a man like him. He was pre-eminently a man of faith, a man who lived in the atmosphere of prayer and of union with the invisible, and he needed not a vision to open his eyes to see that there were more on his side than were against him. So, notwithstanding his isolation, he set vigorously to work in the spirit of faith. As the aims and objects of faith are supernatural, so also are the instruments of which it makes use for the attainment of its ends. These instruments are often in the eyes of the worldly simply childish and absurd, and even by certain Catholics are some-

times not prized at their true value ; so prone is the heart to take refuge in mere human prudence and to look exclusively to tangible, material assistance ; in short, as we may say, to "lean upon Egypt." Surrounded by ruins and reduced to the memory of the past, M. Dupont threw himself ardently into all the old traditions of piety. He sought out all the holy places, now desolate or turned to profane purposes, which had been dear to the piety of his fathers. Outside the town there was not a spot within his reach which his ancestors had venerated, whither he did not go to make reparation and pay his homage. Images of the Madonna had been very numerous in Tours, as in all Catholic cities ; he was acquainted with all their former sites. Even where sacrilege had spared but a small vestige at the corners of streets, or over the porches of doors, he discovered them, and never failed to raise his hat as he passed ; nay, he would sometimes go out of his way to salute them.\* The desire of reparation inspired these acts of affectionate devotion. He may be said to have thirsted for reparation.

This thirst was singularly displayed in regard to the ruined Basilica of St. Martin of Tours, that glory of France and tutelary saint of the distant island where M. Dupont was born. With his devotion as a Christian and a son of the Church his patriotism combined to make him deplore his countrymen's neglect of their great and illustrious patron, and feel that their own renovation was inseparably associated with an effort to repair such culpable ingratitude. The Revolution had wreaked its sacri-

\* The same devout practice was conspicuous in that great servant of God, M. Olier.

legious fury on everything connected with the honour of St. Martin in Tours. Rifled and profaned in the first instance, his sanctuaries were afterwards destroyed with cold-blooded calculation. It was not popular fury which made these edifices disappear from the soil of what more than a thousand years ago was styled Martinople, the city of Martin. The crime was deliberately perpetrated at the close of the last and at the beginning of the present century by the existing administration; and when M. Dupont came to settle at Tours, St. Martin seemed well-nigh forgotten. A new generation had sprung up which knew him not, and the very place where his holy relics so long reposed had passed out of memory. No one thought of raising again the walls of the ancient Basilica, the idea would have been deemed chimerical, but it was laid up in the heart of M. Dupont, who regarded the re-construction of the church and the re-establishment of the pilgrimage to his tomb, not only as possible things, but as necessary and indispensable to the regeneration of France.

Full of this thought, he would set forth alone for the most part, but sometimes accompanied by one or two devout friends, when the shades of evening were closing in, and would wander during the night in the silent and deserted streets, following what he called his "way of the cross," which consisted in proceeding from one ruin to another where churches or chapels had stood, now destroyed or profaned, and there, on his knees, saying the *Miserere* and other penitential prayers. He had fourteen of these "stations," of which the first in his thoughts was the Basilica of St. Martin, and the next the church of St. Julien, not at that time rebuilt and restored to Christian worship.

It was while conversing with two holy priests, the Abbé Pasquier, a venerable canon of the metropolitan church, who ultimately became his director, and M. Botrel, with whom he maintained intimate relations during his whole life, and who, we believe, still survives, that M. Dupont for the first time gave expression to his desire, one might almost call it his project, for the re-construction of the Church of St. Martin. For some time he had been vainly seeking within the site of the ancient Basilica for the place where the tomb of the saint had rested, that he might, at least, go and pray there, but neither trace nor memory of the spot existed. Nay more, a persuasion very generally prevailed, founded on certain published plans, that a new street had been carried over it, and that the saint's glorious sepulchre was beneath the highway. It seemed hopeless to expect that the authorities could ever be induced to pull down or divert this new street.

One day, when M. Dupont was questioning the common people of that quarter, a good old woman who was selling vegetables explained to him, after her fashion, how the tomb of St. Martin was not under the road, as was believed; that it had certainly been the intention of the engineer who was employed to trace the plan for a new street on the ruins of the old church, to make it pass over the site of the tomb, and thus cut it in two, but that during the work St. Martin had turned his instrument on one side and made it deviate to the right, and so he missed his object. M. Dupont at the moment did not pay much attention to the old dame's remark, but it recurred to him after he had left her, and he was struck by what she had said. It seemed at least to suggest that doubts might be entertained as to the correctness of the general

opinion. Whence did this old woman derive the assertion which she so confidently made? Popular tradition is never to be lightly set aside, even when events are much more remote than were those of the Revolution at that time, and this was something more than a tradition, for the old woman had been herself living when the ruin of the Basilica was accomplished. In this state of uncertainty, M. Dupont was led to regard with veneration that angle of the Rue St. Martin and the Rue Descartes, opposite what was called Charlemagne's Tower, at which he had stood while conversing with the old dame, and used often to repair to the spot to pray. Whenever he passed that way, whoever might be with him, and whatever the weather might be, he never failed to stop, respectfully uncover his head, careless of sun or rain, and in a low voice recite slowly that verse of the *Miserere* Psalm, *Benigne fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion, ut ædificentur muri Jerusalem*,\* applying it to the Basilica and tomb of St. Martin.

But it was not alone the ruined churches and sanctuaries of Tours which were the object of his visits of reparation; a secret attraction drew him towards all those places which had been consecrated by the piety of former days to the honour of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints. If he showed any preference, it was towards the poorest, the most desolate, and the most deserted of these sanctuaries. The love of pilgrimages seemed innate in him, and one might have imagined that he had a kind of presentiment of the immense good which this form of devotion was in later years to produce. But who in France at that time thought of

\* "Deal favourably, O Lord, in Thy goodwill with Sion, that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up."—Psalm l. 20.

going on pilgrimages? It was regarded, indeed, by most persons as a mediæval devotional practice which, like crusades and other kindred developments of the religious spirit, had passed away with the circumstances which gave them birth, and with the generations to whose temper they were congenial. But with Léon Dupont they were the prime object of his frequent excursions and journeyings. Even when he had some other immediate motive for his journey, such as family affairs, business of one kind or another, or social courtesy, he always visited every sanctuary, great and small, on or near his line of route. Those dedicated to our Lady were foremost in his esteem, and, next to these, St. Martin's ancient sanctuaries, but all were regarded by him with reverence and lovingly sought out. Thus every journey became to him a pilgrimage, or rather a succession of pilgrimages.

Hence arose the idea, which he conceived and carried out, of a book, new and unique in its kind, entitled "*Année de Marie, ou Pèlerinages aux Sanctuaires de la Mère de Dieu.*" Its object was to revive the spirit of pilgrimage, and thus lead to its renewed practice. Each pilgrimage was accompanied by a historic notice and other details, enabling the reader to transport himself in imagination to the sanctuary described. In the case of those distant places which he was not able himself to visit, he spared no pains to obtain the fullest and most reliable information. "All the faithful," he says, in announcing his work, "cannot offer to Mary as often as they would their homage and prayers in the sanctuaries dedicated to her. Happily there are several methods of visiting them. Those who cannot transport themselves thither in person can repair in spirit, and by their pious dispositions obtain



the same favours." He then explains the practice, and demonstrates the fruits of these spiritual visits in terms the fervour of which shows how familiar to him was this devotional exercise. An actual pilgrimage was for M. Dupont a very serious religious act. Whenever it was possible, he performed it on foot and fasting. The first time he went on pilgrimage to Candes, which was honoured as the place where St. Martin died, he was alone. There were not in those days the same facilities of locomotion, so that when he reached Candes the clock was striking eleven; and the parish Mass had long been finished. However, he found the venerable Curé still in the church, and requested to be admitted to Communion, adding that he had heard Mass before setting off in the morning. The Curé, little accustomed to see a gentleman of distinction, such as the stranger addressing him evidently was, asking for Communion in such circumstances, felt suspicious, and refused rather drily. The pilgrim resigned himself without a word of remonstrance, and went quietly to kneel down before the Tabernacle on the bare pavement, inwardly rejoicing at having received this humiliation; and God was pleased to testify how pleasing to Him was this act by making the stone on which he knelt feel, to use his own expression, "as soft as a pat of butter." Soon also the good Curé, who was watching him, perceived the mistake he had made; he relented, and offered him Communion.

His friends were in the habit of calling him the Pilgrim, and he readily adopted the title, and would speak of himself under that designation. A stranger to all except God, and the things of God, passing through the world as not of it, he was in very deed a pilgrim. He went from one sanctuary to another,

praying and meditating alone, or conversing upon pious topics with friends whom he had induced to accompany him. Such invitations, indeed, were gladly accepted, for all who knew him were well aware that they could not have a more agreeable travelling companion. Full of tact, and of unobtrusive but considerate kindness, he knew also how to enliven the way by his conversation, which, although it never lost sight of his one object, had a freshness and an originality in it which would often cause a smile, while it never ceased to edify. His good breeding was perfect, and he had the art—if anything about him could be called art, where all had the spontaneity of nature—of putting every one at his ease. The ties of friendship contracted upon these journeys were close and enduring, a consequence not always realised in such cases. For a thoroughly satisfactory travelling companion, it must be confessed, is more or less a rarity, and not a few friendships, so far from being strengthened, have been slackened by the experiment of a prolonged peregrination in company; such daily near association, where tastes and tempers are often dissimilar, if not discordant, tending to develop differences rather than promote union. But the results are far other where hearts and souls are in unison as regards the object sought, especially when that object is of a holy character; and still more, it may be added, where he who is virtually the leader has the genial companionship of Léon Dupont. This quality was with him more or less a natural endowment; not so, however, the humility which led him to obliterate his leadership and make himself the servant of all. That he was very careful in choosing his companions and considered identity of object as essen-



tial, is proved by his giving up at the last moment a projected pilgrimage to Rome, which he much desired to make, because two persons who he did not think would be suitable associates volunteered to accompany him. "I know my men well enough," he said, "to be aware that we should have made a tourist journey together instead of a pilgrimage in the silence of interior recollection." By and by we shall see him amongst the first to undertake a pilgrimage to La Salette.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY.

PILGRIMAGES were far from exhausting the fervour of M. Dupont, or absorbing all the activity of his zeal. Next to the visiting of the churches where our Lord abides, and the sanctuaries where He is honoured in His saints, he had nothing more at heart than the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. A Conference of St. Vincent de Paul had recently been established at Tours. He desired to belong to it. In their origin and principle the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul—for so the meetings were called—were not a mere charitable association for the assistance, spiritual and corporal, of the poor. Their object was to collect together a number of good and earnest Catholics, young men particularly, in order to fortify them by virtuous friendships, against human respect in the practice of their religious duties, and to strengthen their faith by the opportunity afforded them of intercourse with

distinguished men, lay and clerical, whom it was easy to attract to the weekly meetings. Thus a Conference of St. Vincent de Paul in any locality was the rallying point and *rendezvous* of all those Catholics who felt the necessity of a common action and of mutual union; the visit of poor families being a secondary object, which, while it served as a veil to the principal end in view, acted also as a powerful aid in its promotion. Persons, then, joined the Society, not so much in order to do the work of Sisters of Charity among the poor as to labour seriously for their own spiritual profit, and to exercise also a kind of apostolate among those young men who either belonged to one or other of the liberal professions, or were about to do so, and whose faith, if not lost, had been gravely impaired by the godless education they had received.

Such a work was entirely in harmony with M. Dupont's tastes, and he became one of the most zealous and influential members of the Society, but the influence he exercised was none of his own seeking, for by preference he always kept himself in the background. One who knew him personally says that it was this very reserve, coupled with the fame of his virtues, which obtained him this influence, for those who were acquainted with him, and had a suspicion of the heavenly lights with which he was favoured, as well as full evidence of his princely liberality and magnificent charities, were marvellously edified by the modesty with which he would every week receive the little dole of bread which he was commissioned to distribute, in the name of all, to certain poor families and give in the report of his visits, answering every question with perfect simplicity and an inimitable grace. He rarely spoke himself, was never eager to persuade, and never

supported his opinion with energy ; indeed he seldom gave it. Neither did he care to answer objections ; discussions were repugnant to him. He had one weapon, prayer ; that was his instrument of war and of the Apostolate. He knew that we must act, as well as pray, in union, but it was the action of united prayer to which he attributed the most value ; to convince men and bring them to what seemed a just estimate of things, he knew of nothing better than having recourse to our good God. With Him no argument or discussion was needed. In spite of his quiet unobtrusive ways, he had very soon gathered round him a knot of pious Christians who, as time went on, came to form, as it were, a phalanx of devout men, of whom he was virtually, though undesignedly, the chief. When he afterwards established the Nocturnal Adoration, the principal worshippers were mainly recruited out of this band.

As for the poor, he visited them more than any one, and gave them large alms from his own purse, in addition to the allowance made by the Conference ; and oh, how he loved the poor ! Touching traits of his overflowing tenderness and compassion are recorded ; but, where there is so much to tell we cannot linger over these details. The pecuniary affairs of the Society and the examination of accounts he gladly left to others, as being business not to his taste. The Conference at Tours had numerous charitable works under its direction at that time, which the Catholic " Cercles " now undertake. One of these was classes for adults, in which M. Dupont took a most active interest. His evenings from 7 to 9 o'clock were devoted to teaching these classes, which met three times a-week, and in which 150 working people of different ages and various

trades received elementary instruction. He was always punctually at his post, choosing for his scholars the most ignorant; the objects of his preference being those who did not even know their alphabet. When he had got through the first rough work and had brought them up as far as spelling, he would pass them on to one of his colleagues.

He never seemed better pleased than when installed on a wooden bench and surrounded by these poor men in their working dress, often begrimed with dust and dirt and offensive to more senses than one. There he sat, with a beaming smile on his face and a word of encouragement for all, never annoyed by their dullness, and quite triumphant when any progress, however slight, was made. On these occasions he would lay hold on any member of the Conference who chanced to pass, and bespeak his admiration for the proficiency of some poor fellow who had succeeded in putting together two or three syllables. "He is getting on, he is getting on," he would enthusiastically exclaim; "he will succeed (*Il marche, il marche, il parviendra*)."

There was in particular a big hulking youth who worked in some factory. He was inconceivably obtuse, but a constant pupil of M. Dupont's. Every year he returned to the classes, which were held only during the winter months, and for four or five years M. Dupont continued to devote several hours three times a week to the task of cultivating this ungrateful soil. Hardly less surprising, however, than the patience of the instructor was the perseverance of his stupid scholar. His desire to learn must have greatly exceeded his capacity for acquiring, if it was not rather the exquisite charity and kindness of the master which attracted him. If little success in the art of

reading attended the lessons, they were crowned with a result far more precious. The poor fellow was almost as ignorant of his religion as he was of letters. The teaching, the example, perhaps even the frequent contact with this man of God, awakened in his mind sentiments which, indeed, had always been very vague and confused, but which, such as they were, he was in great danger of losing altogether. The worthy colossus, if he did not get much book-learning, learned how to pray, and learned also the way to church, where he became a constant attendant at Mass and the other offices, and also a frequenter of the sacraments.

M. Dupont was likewise very assiduous in another good work, "*l'œuvre des soldats*," as it was called. Here it was not a question only of instruction, but of supplying the soldiers with innocent and profitable recreation. M. Dupont was admirable at that sort of thing. The peculiarly good-natured expression of his countenance, his noble bearing, and the charming simplicity of his conversation were all high personal recommendations with these men. It was very striking to see the deep attention with which they would listen to him as he spoke of God and heavenly truths, and to note how his words seemed to revive in them the pious feelings of their early youth. He did not address them in any formal manner; all he said was in the way of conversation. As he walked about in the garden, or in the hall set apart for their games, a group would gather round him, varying in numbers, according as some joined and others left it. They asked questions, they listened, and all were delighted. M. Dupont had, in fact, a great gift of familiar talk, and that, too, with all classes. He was very fluent, had a lively imagination and picturesque fancy, and that easy

tone which good society gives, and which is far from being unappreciated even by those who are strangers to it, when it is not coupled with any assumption of superiority. So far removed was M. Dupont from such pretension, that nobody could make himself more completely one of his company than he did, however inferior it might be ; remaining, nevertheless, a perfect gentleman all the time, and never forfeiting a respect which he yet never appeared to claim, still less to exact.

Allusion has been made to his disinclination for discussion and contradiction. Hence, however strong his convictions, he never, as we know, attempted to impose them on others, abstaining as much out of humility as discretion, unless it were question of a point of morality or a dogma of religion. Then, indeed, he could and would both contradict and discuss in whatsoever society he found himself, yet never becoming excited, never losing his cordiality of manner, or saying aught to wound the feelings of his opponent. His remarks, it is true, could be caustic at times and biting when dealing with anti-catholic prejudices and false doctrine. The old lawyer, too, would on occasion peep out, and by his close reasoning and ingenious repartees he would utterly foil, if not convince, his adversary. His guilelessness and sincerity were, however, always so patent that no one was ever offended. This, it may be remarked, would seem to be a privilege enjoyed more or less by all frank, bold, unaffected persons, who can speak out their minds with unruffled good-temper and tell very unpleasant truths to their friends with impunity, where others, picking their way as if among hot coals, might give mortal offence. The eminent physician, Bretonneau, himself one of those admirable talkers in which France has always

abounded, but who, unhappily, was a sceptic, would occasionally be the object of his friend's animadversions, when he would press him so hotly both with pungent satire and trenchant argument that, indisposed to yield but feeling that he was decidedly getting the worst in the fray, he was fain to make his escape through an open window into the garden and fairly take to his heels. But no cloud ever chilled the warmth of their early friendship. M. Dupont had an inexhaustible stock of pious anecdotes, miracles, and religious news of all sorts. He was also gifted with the talent of relating well, and, although he was not sparing in minute details, so far from wearying, they only helped to give life and movement to his description, to which, moreover, he imparted a kind of dramatic interest by his unconscious imitation and reproduction, in gesture and voice, of the incident which he was narrating.

His conversational powers made him a welcome guest in many family circles or small private gatherings, and he willingly frequented those houses where he could talk at ease of God and sacred things, but if any one joined the party who made a change of topic necessary, he would take his opportunity quietly to slip away. He did not, in fact, care to talk of anything but God or what related to God. It was to him a weariness. Yet not only were his friends never tired of his one topic, but they would dispute for the possession of him, of which, indeed, we have an amusing instance. One day, when leaving the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, two of the members simultaneously asked him to spend the rest of the evening at their respective houses. After some contention they agreed to toss up for him, which they did then and there on the *trottoir*



of the Rue Royale, M. Dupont laughing heartily and allowing himself to be led off with perfect docility by the winner. One of the reasons, no doubt, why M. Dupont did not weary others by his religious talk was that he never preached. People do not care to be preached to save from the pulpit. There they expect and like it, but on the part of one who has no commission to teach and exhort they usually think, or at least feel, the practice to be a species of assumption. Even the poor sometimes, we suspect, half-unconsciously share in this spirit of revolt. Persons who make a rule to "improve the occasion" are also decided nuisances. Now, Léon Dupont was not a man of this sort. If he was always talking of God and of the things of God, it was from an overflowing love which could not be repressed; it was from the abundance of his heart that he spoke. True, he also desired the salvation of his brethren, and sought it earnestly, at times even vehemently, but it was as one who, having found a treasure, calls others to share it with him. That treasure is infinite, so he is not jealous of it; the infinite good loses not, but gains, by participation. "*Ecco ! chi crescerà i nostri amori*—Lo ! one arriv'd to multiply our loves," sang the glorified spirits, the "thousand splendours," of the second circle of Dante's Paradiso,\* and, if our loves are multiplied by this participation, then also are our joys, for true love is the only true joy. It was in this spirit that Léon Dupont sought to win souls.

As an instance of the unaffected, straightforward way in which he would introduce the only subject which was interesting to him, we may here give an anecdote recorded of him, though it belongs to a rather later date. In the months which followed the Revolu-

\* Canto V.



tion of 1848, the national guard used to be called out for certain services performed in concert with the regular troops. It was M. Dupont's turn on one occasion to be on guard at night. It was weary work to share in one of those useless, absurd watches, and the tedious monotony of spending so many hours in total inactivity was aggravated by the further infliction of having to listen to the sort of talk with which men in such circumstances will seek to beguile the time. But it had to be got through; so M. Dupont placed his chair as far as he could from the talkers, a group of the *bourgeois* class, but not far enough for their empty conversation to be inaudible. Near him was a cavalry soldier, who began to yawn. "You are tired of this?" said M. Dupont, pointing to the group of chatterers. "They are not talking of God," he added, as though assigning an obvious reason for his companion's weariness. The soldier, who was a good sort of countryman, was a little surprised both by the question and by the explanation put upon his yawn; he opened his eyes, and made no reply. M. Dupont went on quite at his ease. "It is a very simple thing," he said; "one is always wearied when not occupied with God, or not speaking of God. What is all that talk yonder about? Nonsense, folly, empty idle gossip. What interest can any one take in that sort of thing? God only can interest our souls and touch our hearts. Except God and what can be referred to God, all is vanity; just nothing at all; emptiness and weariness."

The friend who related this occurrence said he could not answer for the precise words, but such was the substance of the speech which M. Dupont made to his chance associate. To some it might seem to

savour of indiscretion, and yet M. Dupont was remarkably discreet. The event justified his venture, which, indeed, with him was no venture at all, but a simple utterance to which he felt himself moved. There was a calmness, a conscious, though graceful, air of authority, with which M. Dupont was wont to speak at such times which compelled attention and respect; but, above all, there was that expression of profound interior conviction which has wonderful power with men, far greater than the most eloquent efforts to convince them. Anyhow, the soldier was evidently impressed, and readily entertained the good thoughts suggested to him. The two talked on, and by and by his comrades were attracted, and they too came within the charmed circle; finally, even the knot of noisy *bourgeois* did not remain indifferent, but approached to join in the conversation, for it still continued to be a conversation; M. Dupont never monopolised the talk or made speeches. But that conversation was clearly not without its fruit, for, before they all parted, M. Dupont had to distribute a number of little bottles of the water of La Salette, with which at that period he had always his pockets well stocked. The most eager were the poor soldiers, who had been enchanted with all he had told them about our Blessed Lady. He served them first, and promised more to any of his fellow-watchers who would come to seek them at his house. Now, as has been observed, M. Dupont had simply been pouring forth the sentiments of his heart. He had not been striving to improve the occasion. Had he spoken with that set purpose, he would perhaps have only managed to multiply the yawns of his companions, if he had not irritated their tempers. He *must* talk of

God,—that was the fact,—and he disliked any society where he could not do this. A *salon* where he was thus impeded was as tedious to him as a *corps de garde*. But he never avoided, nay, he loved the company of his fellow-creatures when he could persuade them to occupy themselves with the interests of God, and his night-watch became agreeable when he had succeeded in doing so. In this spirit he always received whoever came to him, and would talk with them as long as they liked, on this one condition. “To talk of God or hold one’s tongue,” might, indeed, be called his motto or device.

By preference (as has been said) he did not love argument or disputation, nevertheless he did not hold back from discussion with inquiring Protestants, and here his deep acquaintance with Scripture, his sound theology, his extensive reading, as well as his active correspondence with men of high spiritual attainments in all parts of France, from which he knew how to extract full profit, served him in good stead, although he never made a display of either his knowledge or his learning; on the contrary, he strove to hide it. We have an example of his mode of dealing with a learned Protestant in the journal of the late Mr. William Palmer, which he kindly placed at the disposal of the Abbé Janvier when engaged in writing the biography of the “holy man of Tours.” It will be remembered that Mr. Palmer cherished for many years the delusive theory of supposed divisions in the Church Catholic. Firmly persuaded that the Anglican Establishment to which he belonged, formed a portion of the one Church, he believed that he was doing it a service by studying the differences which separated it from what he considered the Greek and Latin branches,

so as to prepare the way for future re-union ; a vague and visionary hope still entertained by a fraction of Anglicans, clerical and lay. With this end in view, he travelled over France, seeking the society of the most enlightened and pious amongst both ecclesiastics and laymen. He, in like manner, visited Germany, Russia, Palestine, and Egypt. These journeys and inquiries occupied a succession of years. His first stay at Tours was in 1834, when he was received in a most friendly spirit by many Catholic families of distinction, and enjoyed the esteem of all who knew him. He returned in 1839, when he formed the acquaintance of M. Dupont, and every day took notes of the discussions which he had with him.

The extreme simplicity of M. Dupont's answers is noteworthy, as being quite in accordance with what we know of his disposition and turn of mind. Instead of answering in detail all the subtle objections which Mr. Palmer alleged, he stated the truth broadly, and insisted much on the necessity of receiving things and believing them like a little child. It would seem, indeed, as if he penetrated into the very soul of his interlocutor, and there discerned its hidden wound ; for, after he had become a Catholic, Mr. Palmer humbly acknowledged that it was less ignorance of the truth than want of simplicity, and a certain pride which comes of learning, which so long hindered his conversion. M. Dupont, however, did not fail to give cogent reasons to meet his opponent's arguments, only they were short and comprehensive, as contrasted with the doublings and turnings to which error is compelled to resort. Mr. Palmer's Catholic Church was the Church such as he deemed it to have been in the early centuries, and was therefore virtually to him a Church

of the past. "As for us," said M. Dupont, "we believe that the Church must be something visible and definite in the present as in other times." Hereupon Mr. Palmer seems to have stated his views concerning the actual division of the Church, owing to a series of misunderstandings, into three communions, the Roman, Greek, and Anglican, and spoke of a project of union entertained by himself and others. "In replying to my arguments," he writes, "M. Dupont declared to me that he could not occupy himself with any such theories, and that he had nothing to say about them, for, as he would have wished it to be understood, he was quite ignorant of theology, and studied only for his own consolation and personal edification. He repeated, however, several times his definition of the Church, saying that my view would open a door to the admission of every sect. He also spoke of the necessity of a tribunal for the condemnation of heresy."

But the practical line of argument was that to which he constantly reverted, probably because he considered that conversion depended more on the docility of the will than on intellectual conviction. Accordingly, we find him enlarging here on the obstacles which hinder so many from coming to the truth ; human respect, fear of men, and other worldly motives. "As for you," he says, "since you have already approached so near, and seem capable of drawing still nearer, a little sincerity (*bonne foi*) and zeal for unity will lead you the rest of the way." M. Dupont was right, but his prognostication was not to be realised until fifteen years later. He took the same line with him when Mr. Palmer brought forward some objections to the scholastic terminology relative to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Instead of giving a direct answer, M. Dupont repeated

that we ought to be simple and docile as little children ; again allowing that he had not studied, that he was no theologian, but that all that he found stated by persons of recognised sanctity he believed. "It is better," he added, "to believe too much than too little." Then, on the authority of the writings of St. Gertrude and the Life of the now Blessed Margaret Mary Alacocque, he proceeded to give Mr. Palmer an account of the institution of the worship of the Sacred Heart and that of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He also described to him the wonderful apparition of the cross of Migné, and the origin, then recent, of the miraculous medal of the Immaculate Conception, in all which Mr. Palmer was much interested. To other difficulties raised by him about Purgatory and the Invocation of the Saints, M. Dupont had generally the same reply as to the necessity of the child-like spirit. On another occasion Mr. Palmer had tried to justify the Anglican Church, and had called the English and Irish Catholics "Romanists and schismatics." "What I see clearest in this matter," M. Dupont replies, "is that every day persons are abandoning you to become Catholics because they wish to save their souls. It is easy to see on which side is the truth, by considering on which side at the time of the Reformation were to be found those who were truly simple, honest, and practical, desiring sincerely to save their souls and gain heaven." And then he pointed out the telling fact that Protestants have invariably more or less of doubts, and are always ready to discuss like men still in search of truth, whereas good Catholics have no doubts, and are only afraid of not having carried their faith well into practice.

The question of the Pope soon presented itself. 'You ought to submit to the Pope,' said M. Dupont. 'You ought to take this course, which is the safest.' 'I endeavoured,' writes Mr. Palmer, 'to show that it would not be the safest course to act against my convictions.' 'Oh, I think,' replied M. Dupont, 'that in your state of mind it would be quite safe for you to shut your eyes to all the difficulties you see in the road which leads to submission to the Pope. You ought to feel seriously shaken if only one of the Fathers,—and in fact there are a great number,—affirmed the supremacy of the Pope by divine right, particularly when there is nothing to set against it.' M. Dupont evinced a great zeal for the conversion of England. 'I would give,' he said, 'every drop of blood in my veins to see it accomplished. Ah, that England! that island of saints!' Twice does Mr. Palmer note down this exclamation, which was the cry of the inmost heart of Léon Dupont, for we know that he never ceased praying all his life for the conversion of our country. On his repeating the observation that Protestants were always inquiring and discussing, but that Catholics had no doubts at all, Mr. Palmer told him that he entered into discussion, not to seek the true faith, which he believed he possessed, but to know the opinion of learned and pious persons in foreign Churches, in order that he might ascertain the points of difference, and what opinions were free and as yet undecided, and thus arrive at a mutual understanding. 'Ah!' exclaimed the holy man, 'you are not praying, you are not labouring, for unity! If you travel about and converse for the purpose of discovering what diversity of opinion may be found among ecclesiastics and theologians, and what new question



of doctrine you may succeed in raising in the Church, you would only be preparing the way for new schisms." Mr. Palmer urged that it was needful to discover what could be done on each side towards unity, without positive retraction; that there might be errors on the one side, or on the other, and it would be something to help towards throwing light on differences which are not really such; but M. Dupont simply repeated with energy, "The only path open to you is to submit to the Pope." Mr. Palmer contended that, if members of the other Churches saw amongst the Anglicans men of great spirituality and holiness, their prejudices might disappear. "St. Augustine," he rejoined, "said with truth that moral virtue and exterior sanctity are not to be taken account of when it is question of heresy." And he again told him that he was "only labouring to create new schisms." He remarked, moreover, on the great difference between the sentiments he expressed and those of the English generally. "Far from praying for unity," he said, "they do not even desire it; as for us, they call us idolaters."

The dogma of the Real Presence was, above all, the subject of long conversations. Mr. Palmer asserted that all good Anglicans believed in it, to which M. Dupont replied that he was the first Englishman whom he had heard use that language. Mrs. Bruce, a lady with whom he had held a long correspondence, did not believe in it. Mr. Palmer attributed this lady's opinion to a misunderstanding of the question at issue. It must be borne in mind that this gentleman did not deny that the Anglican Church rejected the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which affirms that the natural substances of bread and wine no longer



remained after consecration, and it was against this doctrine that he supposed the lady to be arguing; none the less, therefore, did he maintain that the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist was held by his communion, and that no one who had learned his catechism could deny it. Upon this M. Dupont opened a drawer in his bureau, and took out a work entitled "Crossman's Catechism," in which the precise contrary was taught. Now, this Catechism had been adopted and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a society to which all the Archbishops and Bishops of the Established Church and Mr. Palmer himself belonged. Surprised and confused, he could only reply, "If such was the teaching of the Church of England, I should not longer remain a member of it. But Crossman's Catechism is not the Catechism of the Church of England." This contradiction deeply affected him, and he gave proof of his sincerity by not letting the matter drop. It must be remarked, however, that Mr. Palmer had already serious misgivings as regarded his solidarity with what may be called the corporate acts of this ecclesiastically irresponsible body. The Society numbered about 15,000 members, who, so far as their individual rights of teaching went, were all upon an equality, for, although the names of the Archbishops and Bishops lent a prestige to whatever was done in the Society's name, they had no authority over its proceedings and their votes counted no more than did those of the other subscribers. Accordingly, on his return to England, Mr. Palmer brought the subject forward at one of the meetings of the Society ;\*

\* The meeting was held on Tuesday, May 5th, 1840. Mr. Palmer, who was Fellow of St. Mary Magdalene College, Oxford, subsequently published his speech.

proposing the adoption of certain Resolutions which would operate a change in this respect and bring it under the supervision and control of ecclesiastical superiors. In the course of the remarkable speech delivered on that occasion, he gave a detailed account of what had passed the previous summer between himself and a pious layman at Tours, who had drawn his attention to this Catechism. He also gave a sketch of this good Catholic's antecedents, but he was listened to throughout with much impatience, and his arguments against the pretensions of the Society to arrogate to itself the exercise of episcopal functions in doctrinal matters raised a storm of opposition in a large portion of the assembly. Mr. Palmer persevered in spite of interruptions and concluded his address, but, the meeting having refused to consider his proposed Resolutions, on the ground of their involving a change in the constitution of the Society, he felt that no course remained open to him save to withdraw from membership, which he consequently did.

Another proof of the good faith with which he acted is recorded in the journal. M. Dupont had observed that his friend did not make any genuflexion to the Blessed Sacrament when leaving the cathedral. He reproached him with this omission in these terms: "You say that you believe as I do in the Real Presence, yet you did not bend your knee. Ah! you have not faith!" Mr. Palmer strove to make explanations and excuses, but M. Dupont only reiterated, "You did not bend your knee!" He then quoted a passage out of St. John Chrysostom's writings, where that Father speaks of an old man who had received revelations, and who one day, while Mass was being offered, saw Angels bending down around the altar in adoration

of their present God; "and for my part," adds the Saint, "I believe it." Mr. Palmer said neither was he disposed to deny it. "But," rejoined M. Dupont, "you pay no reverence, although the Angels do so." Mr. Palmer replied that he did not presume to associate himself with any religious rites in Catholic churches, where he was only tolerated as a stranger, and was regarded as excommunicated. "Ah!" rejoined M. Dupont, "the laws of men are nothing in such cases. Yes, you Protestants are so far from believing, that you call us idolaters when you see us kneel before the Host." This Mr. Palmer denied. "You may have your own private opinion on the subject," replied his opponent, "but it differs from that of others,—Queen Victoria, for instance;" he was alluding to the Coronation oath. Mr. Palmer said that, whatever might be thought of that oath, it was capable of being explained in the sense of denying only a natural and physical presence. Such an answer was in itself very unsatisfactory, and, no doubt, was felt to be so by him who was obliged to have recourse to it, but M. Dupont never pushed his adversary hard when he saw him embarrassed; accordingly he dropped the subject and began to speak of the ineffable sweetness to be found in devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, in the invocation of our Lady and of the Saints, and in prayer for the dead, of all which his friend was depriving himself.

The effect produced on Mr. Palmer by this conversation, as well as his own docility and freedom from human respect, are evidenced by his henceforth always genuflecting in the cathedral, with which, as he notes in his journal, he was reproached by two Anglican clergymen, Fellows of Oxford, who visited him at

Tours and were witnesses of the act. Although this good man did not see his way into the haven of peace till after fifteen more years of wandering, nevertheless there is good reason to believe that M. Dupont made a strong impression on him and helped in no inconsiderable degree to forward him on the road.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE WORK OF REPARATION.

IF the beneficial influence of M. Dupont in conversation was great, no less so was that which he exercised by his correspondence. The quantity of letters written by him was something prodigious. Unfortunately many which would have possessed the greatest interest for us, are no longer in existence, but a sufficient number remains to enable us to judge of the good which he must have effected in this way. He wrote as he spoke, with facility, simplicity, grace, freshness. His letters, like his words, mirrored his pure soul and reflected the goodness of his heart. "All," says his historian, "have the stamp of holy originality which marks the supernatural man, the man of faith, living in the midst of our modern society, in a world apart, like a Christian of the first ages." When we consider that he often received fourteen or fifteen letters by one post, rarely less than seven or eight, and that he made a point of answering each on the very day it was received, it is difficult to appreciate the amount of labour thus entailed upon

him. For a long time he had quite given up all dinner-parties and similar social engagements, but this cost him little or, rather, nothing. "For twenty-three years," he says, writing in 1859, "I have never dined out, and I cannot tell you the satisfaction I feel when I think of having been able to escape from that tyranny." The trammels of society and all worldly games and diversions were, indeed, exceedingly irksome to him. "It would puzzle you," he says to a friend, "to detect any sign of real joy on the countenances of people engaged in playing backgammon or in any other of those silly trifles invented to kill time. Holy Scripture, by telling us that the time is short, gives us to understand that it is not question of killing it but of employing it well." If, however, what he sacrificed in order to find time for his voluminous correspondence cost him little, yet to his active nature it must have been a great sacrifice to remain fixed for hours together at his writing-desk, pen in hand, answering letters, taking notes, making registers of the recommendations of prayer for the Nocturnal Adoration, or Holy Face, and the like; yet to look at him, with his tranquil and satisfied air, no one would have suspected what a burden was laid upon him. As long as he enjoyed any leisure he allowed his pen to run on, especially when his mind was freshly occupied by some fact or event having a religious bearing. But later, when his time was absorbed by the crowd of pilgrims to the Holy Face, his letters became shorter and shorter, yet are they never wanting in some pious thought, often most happily expressed, and, at any rate, always the natural and spontaneous utterance of his heart, as was his every word. A certain portion of a correspondence which he kept up for years with a god-daughter of his,

whom he had adopted in Martinique when she became an orphan, and sent to France for her education, has been preserved, and contains quite a remarkable course of spiritual education. His exquisite Christian tact is displayed in the advice which he gives to this girl, always adapted to her age and situation, and to the different trials and vicissitudes which, as she grew up, she was called to encounter. These letters exhibit at once his knowledge of the human heart, the wisdom of his direction, and his charitable condescension towards a young person whom he treated as if she had been his own child. Most of those addressed to her contain from four to eight pages, often of a large size, written in a small neat hand, amidst multiplied occupations and frequent interruptions. His pupil survived him, mourning him as a father and venerating him as a saint.

By his conversation, letters, and charitable works M. Dupont, without the sacerdotal character and mission, was exercising a kind of apostolate and acting in the spirit of a priest. It was but natural, then, that many of his friends should be surprised that he should continue in the secular state, and not aspire to one more perfect. A holy missionary in America, who knew him well, and with whom he was in close correspondence, was of this number, and earnestly invited him to come and join him in his Indiana mission. M. Dupont was deeply moved by this appeal. His heart in one sense cordially responded to it; and had he felt worthy to follow on his friend's track, it would have been a happiness beyond measure to him. It would have drawn him, he said, out of the profitless road in which he was walking, doing nothing for the good God. For twenty-two years he had daily said to our Lord, *Sic volo, sic desidero: quidquid mihi*

*deest tu digneris supplere*.\* He therefore begs his friend to do a holy violence to the Lord in order that he may cease to be an idle member of His family. The good Father returned to the charge several times, and received replies of an analogous nature. M. Dupont evidently did not see his way any further. How often, at a time when he was bound by fewer ties than at present, had he sincerely, as he believed, besought the Lord to make known to him His will, and yet he had never seemed to hear the *Sequere Me*, which, indeed, was a call not addressed to the bulk of ordinary Christians. Always, on the contrary, had he seen before him "the little road of little souls," and in that road he had continued to walk. One of the missionary's most urgent letters had found him at the Baths of Nérès, to which he had been sent by his physician for the cure of an acute attack of rheumatism, a complaint from which he was to suffer much, and which was beginning to lay hold of him sharply from time to time. He was then forty-six. "Such appears for the moment," he says, "to be my allotted employment, instead of aspiring to the high things which your friendship deems possible for the miserable pilgrim of the royal high-roads of France. If God by His Almighty hand does not remove me from off the dead flat along which I am forced to drag myself laboriously, I shall never be good for anything, not more were I with you than I am here." But still he entreats the Father to redouble his prayers, that God would enable him to do something for the glory of His name. He would himself strive more and

\* "This is my will, this is my desire : whatever is wanting to me do Thou vouchsafe to supply."—*The Following of Christ*, B. iii. c. x.



more to place himself in God's hands. The poor pilgrim would thus at least enter into the category of the men of good will. "I love," he says, "to station myself in imagination in the market-place where the Father of the family comes to seek labourers for His vineyard. Alas! His eyes, doubtless, do not behold me in a sufficiently humble attitude of supplication, since the hours run on without my receiving orders to join the faithful band of workers." Little did he suspect, while penning these lines, that God was soon about to make of him one of His most active labourers and most useful servants,—the labourer in the work of reparation and the servant of the Holy Face!

Humility and prudence, then, united in deterring him from yielding to the impulses of zeal. He had reached middle age, his mother and daughter were still living, and both had claims on his care in different ways. Still he seriously examined his vocation anew, and the conclusion he came to was that he was not called to be either a priest or a missionary. The apostolate which M. Dupont was to exercise in his country was that of reparation, and to this the Providence of God was about to lead him. Already he was unconsciously preparing himself for the office by prayer, and, as we have seen, his devotion was all instinct with the spirit of reparation. To obtain the salvation of France, and to make amends to God for the scandals which were daily committed, he gladly united himself in adoration and supplication with other holy souls. Among these scandals there was none which more deeply pained him, or more excited his indignation, than the sin of blasphemy, then so prevalent in France among all classes. This horrible vice was a legacy of the Revolution of 1793. It had



passed into the habits even of educated and literary men, persons who now-a-days, whatever might be the amount of their unbelief, would consider the language which was common at that period as gross and unbecoming, an outrage on good manners, if nothing more. The very children often had their mouths full of oaths and coarse profanity before they could be aware of the meaning of what they uttered, and that unchecked in the presence of their parents.

M. Dupont displayed a holy boldness in rebuking a vice which directly insulted the majesty of God. If any word of this kind met his ear, no matter where, neither fear nor human respect had any power to restrain his indignation, which transported him, so to say, out of himself, and impelled him to acts upon which scarcely any one else would have ventured, but of which the blessing frequently attending on them proved the origin; for his was not a mere natural anger, such as may arise, it is true, from a just cause, but is still only the wrath of man which worketh not the justice of God. His was a holy anger, and we may well believe was a direct movement of the Spirit of God. One day, when he was travelling, and was seated beside the driver of the vehicle, the latter began to indulge in his evil habit of cursing and swearing. Instantly M. Dupont turned round, and gave him a sharp box on the ears. The driver at once stopped his horses, and loudly complained of the insult offered to him. "Miserable man," said M. Dupont in a tone of authority, "it is you who have insulted me! You have just been insulting my father! Who gave you the right to insult my father in that way?" "Your father?" replied the bewildered coachman. "Yes," said M. Dupont; "God is my father and your father; why do you out-

rage Him, as you did just now?" and then, with all that eloquence of the heart in which strong faith and ardent charity find their utterance, he went on to show how unworthy it is of a Christian thus to insult the Thrice-Holy God. The poor man, confused, said it was a bad habit he had contracted, but promised to correct it. By the time they reached their journey's end the two had become very good friends. On taking leave of him, M. Dupont gave him a five-franc piece, and asked him to come and see him at Tours, which he afterwards did. He was then leading a good Christian life, and told M. Dupont that, thanks to him, he had quite corrected himself of his old fault.

Another time, when he was travelling on the top of a *diligence* between St. Malo and Rennes, the postillion kept blaspheming constantly. Each time he swore, M. Dupont, although there were two or three commercial travellers sitting close by him, said a *Gloria Patri* out loud in reparation. At last, unable to control himself any longer, he laid hold of the postillion's arm and said, "My good friend, pray have done with blaspheming God's Holy Name. Whenever you have a mind to swear give me a box on the ear instead. I should much prefer it." A nun who once travelled in the *coupé* of a *diligence* with him, related how he paid the postillion so much a league on condition that he did not swear. It was the same when he was walking along the streets and highroads; he never failed to rebuke blasphemers, although he would often only get insult and bad language in return. One day, however, as he was passing along the Rue Royale, a street which he avoided, if possible, on account of many scandalous things which he did not like to see, he met a wretched fellow cursing and swearing out-

rageously. He stopped him and told him either to hold his tongue or give him a box on the ear. "Why, sir, should I give you a box on the ear?" asked the man thus strangely addressed. "Because it would pain me less than hearing you outraging the Holy Name of God." The man seemed greatly struck by these words. He begged the gentleman's pardon and promised to correct himself. M. Dupont was always on the look-out to prevent as well as to rebuke this sin, and he would take minute precautions to that effect. "One day," says a friend, "I was with M. Dupont in the Rue de la Scellerie. We were near the middle of the road. He saw a stone as big as your fist, so he stooped, picked it up, and placed it against a neighbouring wall. "When you find a stone in the middle of the road," he said, "you should put it on one side, for it might make a man or a beast of burden stumble, and, besides the harm that it might do them, the man might fly in a passion, swear, and blaspheme the Holy Name of God, which would be a much worse misfortune." His great devotion to St. Louis, King of France, was largely owing to that monarch's zeal for the punishment and reformation of blasphemers, and every year he prepared himself for his feast by a forty days of special prayer, called the Quarantine of St. Louis.

This Quarantine of prayer plays a great part in M. Dupont's life, and he looked upon it as the foundation-stone of his work of reparation. A few words must therefore be said about it. The formula of prayers was sent early in July, 1843, to the Mère Deshayes, third foundress of the Sacré Cœur, then residing at Tours. Several copies arrived by post, and no one ever knew whence they came. Their object was the glorification of the Holy Name of God and reparation

for blasphemy. The leaflets distributed to the faithful had on them a little cross surrounded by a large crown of thorns, with this motto: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." Then, written on separate lines, followed, "Union of prayers from the 16th July to the 25th August inclusive, for the needs of the Church and of the State. *Pater, Ave, and Gloria Patri* to be repeated three times. 'St. Michael and all ye holy Angels, pray and fight for us. St. Peter and all ye Apostles, intercede for us. St. Ignatius, St. Teresa, and all ye inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, pray for us.' Aspiration during the day: 'May Thy Name, O Lord, be known and blessed at all times and in all places. Most holy Mary, reign over us, thou and thy Divine Son. Amen.'"

This union of prayers was distributed at Tours to some pious souls, and, amongst others, was sent to M. Dupont, who received and practised it with enthusiasm. For some accidental and unexplained reason the formula was not sent to the Carmelites, who had accordingly no knowledge of it whatever. It is well to note this, because the circumstance gives additional value to what occurred in their community on August 26th, the very day after the feast of St. Louis and the close of the Quarantine. Among the Carmelite religious at Tours was a young and very holy sister, who had been a simple workwoman at Rennes, and had been drawn by a special attraction to their Order. She had a great devotion to St. Martin, and used to beg him earnestly to call her into his diocese. The very name of the city of Tours had been dear to her on his account, nevertheless she was not aware that there were any Carmelites in the place. Providence, however, eventually removed all the obstacles in the way

of her vocation, and both her desires were fulfilled. She made her profession in the year 1841, when she took the name of Marie de Saint -Pierre. Her eminent virtues and the sweetness of her disposition had endeared her to the whole community, but none save her superiors, to whom she was bound to make them known, were aware of the extraordinary graces and supernatural communications with which she was favoured ; indeed, she had earnestly prayed that they might remain concealed from the community, and this, in fact, they were as long as she lived. Her superiors, and those to whom they privately confided them, were alone cognisant of these wonders. Among these last, few in number, there can be little doubt but that M. Dupont, who had such intimate relations with the Prioress of the Carmelites and with the Superiors of the monastery, was included, and that he knew all from the first ; his discretion would have sealed his lips. But to return to what occurred on the above-mentioned day, which shall be related in M. Dupont's own words, extracted from documents which he left at his death. "Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre, who had been an inmate of the convent only three years, had edified the Community by her ardent devotion to the Infant Jesus, when all of a sudden, after Mass, on the 26th August, 1843, she sought the Reverend Mother Prioress and, throwing herself at her feet, said, Our Lord has just commanded me to repeat, and cause to be repeated as often as I can, the following invocation regarding the great crime of blasphemy : 'May the most holy, the most sacred, the most adorable, the unutterable Name of God be praised, blessed, loved, adored, glorified in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, by all creatures that have proceeded from the

hands of God, and by the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.' ”

The similarity of this invocation to the daily aspiration in the Quarantine of St. Louis, which had closed only the previous day, at once suggested itself to M. Dupont. This union of prayers, in which many holy souls had joined, seemed to him to have hastened the birth of the work of reparation. Two other coincidences forcibly struck him. On the 8th of August of this same year, Gregory XVI. put forth a Brief, authorising the institution of pious confraternities having for their object the extinction of blasphemy. The other remarkable circumstance was that about the same time it was accidentally discovered that a little printed leaflet, of the date of 1819, entitled, *A warning to the French people, or a reparation inspired in order to appease the anger of God*, had been published with the approbation of the Vicar-General of Poitiers; that its object was the extinction of blasphemy, and was occasioned by a revelation made to a pious Carmelite of that city, Mother Adelaide, who died in the odour of sanctity on the 31st July, 1843; that is, only twenty-six days before Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre received the commission of which mention has just been made. “It was,” observed M. Dupont, “as if God had waited for the death of one of His prophets to raise up another.” The ties which united M. Dupont to the Carmel were further strengthened by this event, and it helped to forward him on the path by which God was about to lead him. The communication of the 26th August was but the prelude to a series of special graces to the humble religious who had received it, having for their object the institution of a confraternity designed to repair the crime of

blasphemy and profanation of the Sunday. Although the Sister had often proved her mission by facts which might be regarded as miraculous, nevertheless little as yet was done in proportion to what she was continually pressed to require, and M. Dupont records that she suffered cruelly from the delay. All that could be obtained was permission to print some little fly-leaves called, *Feuilles de Saint-Louis*, consisting of prayers which had been first issued at Poitiers, under the title of *Association for the Extinction of Blasphemy*, headed by a representation of St. Louis, kneeling, with this inscription: "May the Name of our Lord be blessed." They were now reprinted at Tours with the approbation of the Archbishop, Mgr. Morlot, who had been kept regularly informed of the revelations made to Sister Saint-Pierre, and had taken a lively interest in them.

The Superiors of the monastery, as a matter of prudence, would not personally undertake the charge of printing these leaflets. M. Dupont accordingly acted as their intermediary in all the practical parts of the business. Mgr. Morlot much approved the choice, and some time later wrote to him on the subject of the work of reparation for which Sister Saint-Pierre had been enjoined to ask, expressing a wish for a second issue of the *Feuilles de Saint-Louis*, with the addition of a note concerning the indulgences granted by the Holy Father's Brief to which allusion has just been made. The prelate also permitted the addition of an act of reparation to the Holy Name of God, and the aspiration of praise so much recommended by the Sister. The associates were to engage never to utter a blasphemy, to use their influence to hinder others from committing this offence, and to make reparation



for any profane words they heard by an invocation with the lips or with the heart. This beginning of encouragement on the part of the good Archbishop was the subject of joyful exultation to the servant of God. On one of the printed leaves he wrote, *Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine: dedisti letitiam in corde meo*,\* and at the foot "St. Veronica, pray for us." It was the dawn of the worship of the Holy Face.

The Holy Face of our Lord has had Its faithful and devout adorers in His Church at all times, as also had His Sacred Heart; yet, even as that devotion received a peculiar development by the revelation He was pleased to make to the Blessed Margaret Mary, so also, may we firmly believe, was it to be with the worship of His Divine Face. And, again, as in the case of the worship of the Sacred Heart a woman and a man were spiritually associated in the work of carrying out His loving purposes, she in receiving the supernatural intimation and he in labouring to spread the knowledge of it and promote its influence—and how often does this seem to have been our Lord's gracious way of dealing with His Church—so here again we find a holy nun divinely illuminated, as we have reason to believe, to procure the propagation of this devotion to His Adorable Face, and a pious layman raised up to undertake the work with all that marvellous faith, hope, and love with which he was so richly endowed. In all that had been imparted to M. Dupont of the communications made to Sister Saint-Pierre in connection with the work of reparation for blasphemy, what had most struck him was the

\* "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us: Thou hast given gladness in my heart."—Psalm iv. 8.



means of effecting it indicated by our Lord to His servant, viz., the worship of His Holy and Dolorous Face, constituting It thus the exterior and sensible sign of those works of reparation of which the world, and France in particular, had so great need. His whole soul was ravished with the idea. As, however, we shall return to this subject hereafter, this indication of its purpose may suffice for the present.

M. Dupont now became the diligent propagator, or, to use his own expression, the "hawker" (*colporteur*) of the *Feuilles de Saint-Louis*. They could not have had a better. He conceived at this time also the idea of composing a little office in honour of the Name of God. The manuscript papers left by him testify to the pains he must have taken in its preparation. He had collected and classified a number of texts out of every part of Holy Writ, interspersing them with prayers. Out of these he made a selection which formed a kind of liturgy, appropriated to the object he had in view, that of reparation. But he never relied on himself or desired to work alone; accordingly, he submitted his manuscript to the judgment of the Grand-Vicar of Saint-Brieux, whom he begged to complete and correct it. It was ultimately printed at Tours, with Mgr. Morlot's approbation, in the same volume with another small work entitled, *Association of Prayers against Blasphemy, Cursing, and the Profanation of Sundays or Feast Days*. This latter work contained the statutes of the Association, reflections on its object, acts of reparation, and other devotions. It was not the exclusive composition of M. Dupont, although he gave most valuable assistance in its arrangement and in seeing the volume through the press. The whole was finally edited by the Abbé Salmon, the chaplain of

the Carmelites and confessor of Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre, who was herself the authoress of most of the additional prayers, which had been designed originally for her own personal devotion.

For three years this pious Carmelite had been asking on our Lord's behalf for a general work of reparation, giving as its exterior sign His outraged Face, and for this purpose she had composed some Litanies of the Holy Face, canticles, and other prayers addressed to this adorable Object. The above-named publication helped to prepare the way for this general association, and it was a further step in advance when the Archbishop of Tours sanctioned the printing and circulation of the beautiful Litanies and prayers in question. We need not follow step by step the progress made towards the attainment of the end in view, in which no one took a more active and effectual part than did the subject of this biography. The movement of devotion towards reparation was extending itself and becoming more marked throughout the Church, when an additional impulse was given to it by the words of Pius IX., who, in a discourse delivered at Sant' Andrea della Valle in the beginning of the year 1847, had publicly deplored this fatal vice of blasphemy, with which Rome itself was defiled. "My dear children," said the Sovereign Pontiff, "I give you a mission to apply yourselves to the repression of this diabolical language." M. Dupont desired nothing better than to consider himself as one of the "dear children" to whom this injunction was addressed. His hopes stopped short of nothing less than the canonical erection for the entire world of a well-organised and well-approved association, such as Sister Saint-Pierre had asked for, having as its double object the reparation

for blasphemy and also for the violation of the Sunday, for that, in fact, was blasphemy in action.

The communications of Sister Saint-Pierre had spoken of terrible chastisements impending; France especially was menaced; and then came the Apparition of La Salette, when the Mother of Mercy herself spoke the same language, to give further activity to the movement towards reparation. All this movement, all these desires, which were working in the minds of the faithful, and which had been approved in many dioceses, where they had led to organisations for united prayer, were wanting as yet in that character of combination and universality which was required. Mgr. Parisi, Bishop of Langres, was moved to respond to this need. In bringing this result about M. Dupont had a large share, for it was in consequence of the representations of a good layman of all that he had learned from M. Dupont during a visit he had lately made in Touraine, that Mgr. Parisi, much struck by what he had heard, decided on taking action. He wrote at once to the Archbishop of Tours, who preferred leaving to him the initiative as a matter of precaution, on account of the revelations made to the Carmelite Sister, concerning which he did not think it opportune to pronounce a public opinion. Mgr. Parisi, then, by an episcopal ordinance of the 28th June, 1847, the Vigil of SS. Peter and Paul, erected a confraternity for the reparation of blasphemy and profanation of the Sunday in a parochial church of Saint-Dizier, dedicated to St. Martin, and he despatched the Abbé Marche, Curé of that parish, to Rome to solicit in favour of the association the title of Archconfraternity and special indulgences. Pius IX. welcomed the petition of the Bishop of Langres, not only cordially but joyfully, and it was on this occasion that he uttered the oft-quoted

words : "Reparation is a work destined to save society." He granted the desired indulgences, raised the association of Saint-Dizier to the dignity of an Archconfraternity by a Brief of July 30th, 1847, and wished his own name to be inscribed the first on the register of the members. Thus was realised in a great measure Sister Saint-Pierre's desire in conformity with the inspiration she had received. Mgr. Parisi, as already indicated, was not proceeding in ignorance of these inspirations, and his opinion may be further gathered from the fact that he directed the Curé of Saint-Dizier, before going to Rome, to place himself in communication with the Carmel of Tours.

The drawing up of the rules of the Confraternity, as promulgated by the Episcopal mandate, had been the object of long and minute discussion ; at last an agreement was arrived at on the main points. It was much regretted at Tours that in the Episcopal ordinance of Langres no mention was made of devotion to the outraged Face of our Lord, which had been indicated by Sister Saint-Pierre as the sensible object of reparation. This was partly owing, it may be supposed, to the ignorance which existed at Langres as to the special lights accorded on this subject to the humble Sister of Carmel, and partly, which seems the most likely reason,—for Mgr. Parisi and the Curé of Saint-Dizier, at any rate, were aware of these communications,—to the necessity of not appearing, when seeking the approbation of the Holy See, to act on the ground of a revelation not as yet sanctioned by any ecclesiastical decision. However, on the reverse of the Cross of the Archconfraternity the Holy Face of the *Ecce Homo* was engraved, and in the Manual put forth the Litanies of the Holy Face composed by the

Sister were inserted. Evidently there was still much to be done to give to the devotion the desirable prominence and extension which it was hereafter to possess, nevertheless Sister Saint-Pierre expressed herself as satisfied, and the joy of M. Dupont was very great. Moreover, the erection of this Archconfraternity of Reparation so thoroughly responded to the needs of the time, and was so plainly in accordance with the will of God that, from its very beginning, the devotion spread like fire among dry rushes. Parishes affiliated themselves to it by thousands, and the faithful in every quarter of the globe were eager to enrol themselves in it. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that the thought communicated to one holy and humble soul and, through her, to the whole Church became thus the main source of all the similar works of reparation inaugurated in our days. The Lord seems to delight in bringing great things out of small. The instrument is nothing; the power and the glory are His; and these are more clearly manifested by the insignificance of the means employed.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MEDAL OF ST. BENEDICT.

It may be worth while to pause here to consider the subject of this biography under one of his most striking aspects. For it is the living portrait of this holy man, rather than his complete history, which it is desired to set before the reader. To relate every known fact of his well-filled life, or even to range every fact selected

for notice in its chronological order, would be alike out of the question, the first from want of space, the last because so many of his good works proceeded simultaneously side by side ; yet, in order to give any clear idea of them, they must be separately followed out and described.

No one will understand Léon Dupont thoroughly who has not fully grasped the exceptional degree in which he possessed the virtue of faith. Verily, he had a faith which could have removed mountains. Superficial thinkers might have reckoned him to be credulous. It is an easy epithet to apply to those who in an eminent degree exhibit that disposition which our Lord has, perhaps, more often commended in His Gospel than any other. Nowhere is slowness of belief extolled by the lips of the God-Man, but the reverse ; nowhere is a caution uttered by Him against an excess in the opposite direction. Not, of course, that it is meant to deny that there is such a thing as credulity, namely, a promptness to believe astonishing things when there is not a shadow of reasonable proof in their favour,—things often in themselves palpably absurd,—or to believe, nay, greedily swallow, any statements which gratify a gaping curiosity. This is a common fault with weak and ignorant persons, and will be found even among those who in matters of religious faith are cold and exacting. It is a temper of mind plainly so altogether different from that preparedness of heart to believe that our Lord will make good His loving promise to answer the prayer of faith, even to the extent of working miracles in behalf of His confiding children, that no more need be said upon the subject.

Nevertheless, “too much faith,” as they would call it, is distasteful to the minds of some persons, who

yet may be what, in a general way, we should call good Catholics. There was a certain Abbé Boullay, for instance, who died Dean of the Chapter at Tours, and who seems to have belonged to this class. He was a man of refined taste and superior mental powers, remarkable for his learning, for his eloquence in the pulpit, and for his agreeable qualities in society, where he was greatly liked and made much of. The witty Abbé would occasionally betray a tinge of Gallicanism and a slight naturalistic turn in conversation; in short, there was a certain touch of worldliness about him which his better feelings disavowed, for all this was more on his lips than in his intimate convictions. He was about M. Dupont's age, and often laughed at the "holy exaggerations of his neighbour." "Whenever I meet him," he would say, "he always has his pockets full of miracles." Still he had a sincere admiration for the strong faith and virtues of this "great Christian," of which he gave a remarkable proof one day. He was in the sacristy of the cathedral talking with some canons and other ecclesiastics, when M. Dupont came in. They all gathered round to listen to him, and he had much to tell of supernatural facts and the things of God. When he was gone, M. Boullay began to make fun in his light easy way of the "holy man's" readiness to believe that the good God was always working miracles, and added, "That is the only fault I have to find with him, that he has too much faith." But immediately, as if he regretted what had escaped his lips, he caught himself up, and exclaimed with enthusiasm, "Oh! but it is a beautiful fault to have too much faith. He is right; one cannot have too much." Then, breaking off the conversation, he turned round as he was going away, and



said gravely, "Gentlemen, M. Dupont is a saint; let us imitate him."

It is chiefly in connection with the famous medal of St. Benedict, with which he worked so many wonders, that we wish in this chapter to consider M. Dupont's virtue of faith, which was to shine afterwards so conspicuously in the miracles connected with the worship of the Holy Face. It will initiate us into its character, give us some idea of its strength, and serve as a prelude to its later and more splendid manifestations. The love of this holy man for the Church of God made him cherish all those practices which it recommends or authorises. He loved them for their very exterior smallness and humility, which makes some undervalue and hold them cheap. He knew that faith gives its value to the least things, and that between minds which understand each other the most insignificant sign may embody an act of priceless worth. As he was pretty well always praying, he did not feel any additional prayer or invocation to be a burden. There were but so many hours in the day, and he willingly put into them all which they could hold. He loved scapulars, cords, medals; he accepted them all, he wore them all. He reckoned those people very foolish who would not encumber themselves with these "religious baubles," which, indeed, are in themselves nothing, but which it pleases God to accept as testimonies of reverence and devotion. He regarded them as the liveries of the holy patrons whom God had been pleased to give us, and he gloried in wearing them, as he gloried in being the servant of God, of the Church, and of all the saints. He would have been glad to adopt them as badges of this service, even if they had possessed no virtue and brought no parti-



cular blessing with them. But he knew their power, and so he recommended and distributed them profusely. M. Léon Aubineau tells us that when he met a Christian who was ignorant or regardless of those means of placing ourselves under the Divine protection, there was something so unfeignedly compassionate, so sorrowful, and yet so respectful in his manner, as he drew up his stately figure and cast a glance upward, that it was quite irresistible. The intense reality of his wonder had an altogether imposing effect. We are sympathising creatures, and the sense of exciting the surprise of good men is disturbing to self-confidence. People, in short, do not like to be wondered at, particularly when at the bottom of their hearts they suspect that they are in the wrong, and so the "holy man" commonly succeeded, and his medals and rosaries and other pious objects were accepted, in quarters where it could least have been expected. The case of the night-watch and the little bottles of La Salette water was in one form or another constantly recurring.

It has pleased Divine Providence to bestow a special and extraordinary blessing on such little exterior signs in these latter days, to rebuke, perhaps, the rationalism and scepticism of this boastful age, which pretends to explain everything on scientific grounds, and would banish God from His own creation. The prodigious graces obtained by the medal of the Immaculate Conception, which had its origin, as is well known, in a revelation made to a nun in the year 1830, will be fresh in the memory of most of us; nor have they yet ceased. But devotion to medals is by no means new in the Church, nor has the virtue of the more recent ones extinguished that

of the more ancient. The medal of St. Benedict had early attracted the attention of this devout servant of St. Martin. He knew what battles the Patriarch of the monks of the West, no less than the great Thaumaturgus of Gaul, had been constrained to wage against Satan, and how he always came victorious out of the struggle. Now, the weapon which St. Benedict habitually used against the devil was the sign of the cross. It was by making that sign that he caused the cup which contained a poisoned beverage, presented to him by the agents of Satan, to be shivered into fragments. It was with the sign of the cross that he worked miracles, converted idolaters, and tamed the fierce populations of the Apennines. But it would appear that the power of the saint over the spirit of darkness, the merits of his faith, in a word, all the benedictions of his life, are, so to say, concentrated in the celebrated medal bearing his name. We find mention of it in the earliest times, when a supernatural and miraculous power was attributed to it by Catholic piety. The Church set her seal on this devotion, and many Popes, amongst whom Benedict XIV. may be particularly mentioned, enriched this ancient medal with special privileges and numerous indulgences.\* The initial letters which are engraved upon the side on which is the cross, indicate several ejaculatory invocations designed as weapons against the assaults of the devil. Of these, the letters standing for *Vade retro, Satana; nun-*

\* For a full description of the "Medal and Cross of St. Benedict, its origin, meaning, and privileges," the reader is referred to a work so entitled, by the Right Rev. Dom Prosper Guéranger, O.S.B., Abbot of Solesme, which has been translated from the French by a monk of the English Benedictine Congregation of St Edmund's College, Douai, France.

*quam suade mihi vana. Sunt mala quæ libas ; ipse venena bibas*\* are supposed to represent St. Benedict's own words ; the first used against the fiend when he assailed him with temptation in the cave of Subicao, and the Saint overcame him with the sign of the cross ; the second, when his enemies proffered to him the cup of death, which he shattered by making over it the sign of salvation. M. Dupont's hatred of the devil, who, indeed, was the one sole object of his hatred, was a powerful reason with him for a high esteem of the medal. Pained by observing that it had fallen into neglect, and that few wore or used it, he made great exertions to restore it to its former honour. He instituted the most minute inquiries, both personal and by means of friends whom he employed, to ascertain the exact, primitive form of the letters, and on this subject consulted the most learned religious and archæologists in different countries. But especially he put himself in relation with the Benedictines of Solesme, and in particular with the illustrious Dom Guéranger, with whom he was so well acquainted, and who, as he observes in one of his letters, had often experienced the value of this medal against the demon. "He spent two hours with me last Thursday," we find him writing ; "he greatly loves his Blessed Father, that great enemy of Satan !"

When he had thus arrived at discovering the most authentic form, he caused a number of medals to be struck off and distributed them diligently. He provided himself with thousands of various sizes and materials, and had always a store of them in his pockets, to give away when he had the opportunity.

\* "Begone, Satan ; never suggest to me vain things. That which thou pourest out is evil ; drink thou thyself the poison."

“When any one wants a medal,” he said, “they do not think of going to buy one, they come to the Pilgrim.” This was just as he wished. The Capitaine Marceau, that true Catholic mariner, who, it will be remembered, was commander of the *Arche d’Alliance*,\* was among the first to receive one from him, and, like his friend, became its zealous propagator. He also sent a number to Italy for the Princess Borghese and other devout persons, who undertook to circulate them. M. Dupont’s confidence in the medal was unbounded, and the wonderful results which it was constantly obtaining fully justified that confidence. Passing by the cures in sickness and protection in danger, examples of which may be seen in Dom Guéranger’s publication, and some of which were furnished to him by M. Dupont, whose name, however, is never given in full, we shall find that it was, above all, against the wiles, deceits, and artifices of Satan that he habitually employed it. For the conversion of sinners, the removal of obstacles to any good work, deliverance from every manner of worry and vexation, such, for instance, as freeing a community from an unpleasant neighbour, or assuring the success of a negotiation, M. Dupont strenuously recommended its use. There was not a single religious community in Tours to which he did not render some signal service in this manner. But it was his crowning joy when he had obtained the conversion of a sinner; this medal he regarded, indeed, as a special gift of Providence, designed to prepare souls and clear, as it were, their soil by turning out the devil, the great obstacle to grace.

\* The vessel so named was employed in the service of the missions of Oceania, and, under its devout and zealous commander, might be compared to a floating church.

Here is a striking example, where it may be said to have had the effect of an exorcism. A poor afflicted creature, who had been living a most abandoned life, was compassionately received into a charitable asylum, where misery was sufficient plea for admission; she continued, however, as she lay on her sickbed, to utter the most disgusting language, mixed with horrible blasphemies. Every one considered her to be possessed, and, as she never left her bed, a doubt arose whether she might not have concealed about her some diabolical charms which kept her in this evil mind. One day, when it was necessary to make certain repairs in the dormitory, the paralysed woman had to be removed to an adjoining room, during which operation she howled dreadfully. The Sisters took the opportunity to search under the mattress, and there they found a bag containing some very suspicious-looking objects. In place of the bag they deposited a medal of St. Benedict, which M. Dupont had given them. The woman was soon carried back, and it would seem as if the evil one had told her of what had been done, for, as they approached the bed, she began to rail furiously at the Sisters, complaining of having been robbed of her bag. But no sooner had she been replaced in the bed than she suddenly calmed down. For the first time, her face, the features of which had been hitherto fearfully distorted, assumed a tranquil and even happy expression. She asked for a priest, and made her peace with God; a few days later, the infirmary, converted into a temporary chapel and gay with flowers and lights, beheld our Lord coming to visit this poor soul, now free and rejoicing as the bird which has escaped the fowler's snare. She continued ever after a subject of edification to all. Other equally

remarkable conversions might be mentioned, in which, although the diabolical influence was not so patent, it was nevertheless not less real, and all the more dangerous because it was more subtle and concealed.

But if the medal could drive the devil from the souls which he was enthralling, it could also expel him from places where he was lurking in ambush to do his evil work. The "holy man" was used to throw it into the foundations or round the walls of buildings from which he desired to evict Satan. How many did he not thus secrete in cellars and in the houses which abutted on the ruins of St. Martin's ancient church! When he was afterwards engaged in making purchases necessitated by the projected reconstruction of the Basilica, where prudence required that precautions should be taken lest the proprietors should perceive the importance attached to the transaction, as well as in other difficulties of this kind, M. Dupont, either himself or through the instrumentality of persons in his confidence, would contrive to ensconce the wonder-working medal in some portion of the edifice for which he was in treaty. The device never failed, and the bargain, generally an advantageous one, was always immediately concluded. The emissaries of Satan felt the power of St. Benedict's medal no less than their leader. A bad Catholic, who was secretly in the pay of Protestants, apostatised. He had found employment in a manufactory of nails, where his behaviour was good and his work satisfactory. But he soon began to betray his opinions before his Catholic fellow-workers, and this having reached the ears of the proprietor of the factory, who was a good Christian, it caused him and his family much uneasiness, for, apart

from this man's apostasy, which they only suspected, there was no plausible ground for turning him off. In this dilemma, the manufacturer consulted M. Dupont, who advised him to put a medal of St. Benedict as near as possible to the place where this individual worked, which was done that very evening. The next morning, at breakfast time, the workman begged to see the master, and briefly asked to settle with him. "But why?" "I don't know, but I wish to leave." "Have you any complaint to make of any one in the house?" "No, but I want to go away." And the unhappy man was soon on his road to Orleans.

About the year 1849, a very active Protestant propaganda was set on foot in Touraine. A minister had established himself in a pretty country-house at the entrance of a village, and had there opened a school. All the good Catholics of the neighbourhood were groaning over this affliction, and praying to be delivered from it. A medal of St. Benedict placed under the threshold had soon the desired effect. In a few days a board might be seen before the door announcing that the house was for sale. In the neighbourhood of Tours a mansion was being built at which the work was continued on the day of rest. M. Dupont, passing by one Sunday, witnessed this scandal, and his spirit kindled within him. So he threw a medal among the masonry, and went his way. The next morning, to their astonishment, the workmen found that the building had all fallen in during the night. The medal of St. Benedict was also the means of rescuing the celebrated sanctuary of Notre Dame des Ardilliers from the mutilation and desecration which had been commenced under the futile pretext of widening the high road, already quite



sufficiently broad. The wall which was to cut off a considerable portion of the church had already risen to the height of twenty feet, when M. Dupont, journeying that way, stood for a moment in speechless indignation, and then exclaimed, "No, it shall not be so!" Firm in faith, he calmly attached a medal to the foot of our Lady's image, which had been removed from its proper place on account of the proposed demolition. A few days later, the overseer of the highways, who had recommended the Municipal Council to undertake this wretched business, died suddenly, and his successor, struck both with the inutility and the odious character of the projected mutilation of the house of God, gave orders to stop the work at once. This incident created quite a stir in the country, and the death of the overseer was looked upon as a judgment of God. "Good M. Dupont," it was said, "has his terrible moments and sometimes kills his men."

M. Dupont hated spiritism as the work of the devil, and animal magnetism in all its branches as a field for the enemy's operations. Not many years after he had settled at Tours, a celebrated magnetiser, who was making the round of the provinces, stopped at that place to give some public *séances*. He was accompanied by a young somnambulist girl, who was a source of great profit to him. The exhibition was to be close to the Carmelite convent, in what had formerly been a church, but had been sold during the Revolution. M. Dupont asked the Prioress whether she would aid him in playing the devil a trick. "Very willingly," was the reply. So, after telling her of the *séance* about to take place a few steps from the convent, he gave her a medal of St. Benedict to hang up that same evening, at the hour



appointed for the meeting, on the wall which faced the place where it was to be held. This was done, and they both prayed hard to St. Benedict. He did not fail them. Crowds flocked to the show, but only to go away disappointed. The magnetiser failed altogether to put the girl in a state of clairvoyance; all his efforts could effect nothing. The next evening the result was precisely similar. The audience got nothing for their money, so the magnetiser thought it best to decamp on the following day—need it be said?—to M. Dupont's great joy, who rubbed his hands with glee at the victory won by St. Benedict over his ancient enemy.

Such was the supernatural virtue of St. Benedict's medal in M. Dupont's eyes that he did not hesitate to make use of it even in the case of animals, or of the fruits of the earth, whenever he suspected that deleterious effects resulted more or less directly from Satanic agency, and this with much success. Thus it was in the case of some unproductive hens belonging to a religious community, which, notwithstanding all the care bestowed upon them, had not laid a single egg for months. The Sisters grew impatient, and had killed six or seven of the birds. The medal, hung up in the fowl-house, soon produced the desired result. M. Dupont made very merry over this curious fact. He more than once alludes to it in writing to his friend M. d'Avrainville. "I hasten," he says, "to give you news of the hens. Since Satan has taken himself off, they have begun to lay eight eggs regularly every day; there are sixteen of them. It is very droll, as you see." He was equally successful with a cow, the loss of which would have been a serious matter to a poor community to which it belonged. She was

attacked by a disease which the veterinary surgeon declared incurable. A medal was laid on her back, and the next day she was perfectly well.

M. d'Avrainville, whom we have just mentioned as an intimate friend of M. Dupont, was active also with the medal, and made experience of its efficacy in behalf of the "holy man" in a very curious manner. He himself related the circumstance. Taking a turn with him one September day round his garden, he observed that the branches of some trees on the other side of the boundary wall stretched over it, to the injury of the espaliers on M. Dupont's side, whereupon he suggested that he should request his neighbour to lop them. His friend replied by a shrug of the shoulders, expressive of the little importance he attached to the matter; not but that he bestowed some care on the productions of his garden, for they were all given away, and chiefly to the Little Sisters of the Poor. It may be observed, in passing, that M. Dupont had been the means of establishing the Little Sisters at Tours, and always continued to be a great benefactor to their touching charity. "Since this is the way in which you take things," said M. d'Avrainville, "I shall charge St. Benedict with the office of policeman in your garden." Forthwith he took a medal of the saint, and, making the sign of the cross with it towards the encroaching trees, he pronounced the formula the initials of which are inscribed upon it, adding the following words: "Great St. Benedict, thou knowest that all which this garden produces belongs to the poor, nay, to all who show a desire for it; obtain, then, from God that through thy powerful intercession the shade of these trees may not injure this fruit."

The next year, being again in the garden at about the same season, he remarked that two of the neighbour's trees were dead, and a third was in a perishing condition. M. Dupont then told him that for five or six weeks during the last March and April, six or eight of the biggest rooks used to come from the tower of the cathedral of St. Gatien. They pounced upon these trees, broke the buds, and peeled off the bark. At times he had seen as many even as twenty busy at this work, and sometimes, when the bark did not come off fast enough, they would hang on to it by their beaks to facilitate the operation, and allow themselves to fall with their whole weight to the ground. It was singular enough, observes M. d'Avrainville, but they had spared all the trees of the same kind the branches of which did not hang over into M. Dupont's garden. These were flourishing and in full leaf. The narrator called to mind that St. Benedict was pleased to feed a bird of this species, which made its nest over his solitary grotto, and several, we learn from tradition, followed him to Monte Cassino. St. Gregory tells us also that it was his crow that St. Benedict charged to carry away the poisoned bread which a miserable man, at Satan's suggestion, had offered him. Birds of this class, then, especially appertain to the glorious Patriarch. Did it not seem as if he had sent some of them in answer to the appeal which had been made to him? The two friends had no doubt on the subject. We do not pretend to give this curious incident as an unquestionable miracle, any more than others which have been related and which the sceptical will regard as simple coincidences. Rooks, of course, do strip trees, though not, so far as we know, in this peculiarly pertinacious manner and with such an

arbitrary selection. M. Dupont himself, convinced as he was, would not have undertaken to decide the matter, but no decision was required. He only laughed, and said, "D'Avrainville presented the medal of St. Benedict, and the rooks came!" But more than ever did he feel himself obliged, as a matter of strict justice, to give all his vegetables and fruit to the poor.

Many other cases in which instantaneous success followed the use of the medal might be adduced, as, for example, in the extinguishing of raging fires; indeed, all the elements seemed to confess its power, for at the time of the great inundation of 1856, which inflicted so much damage on the city of Tours, just when the danger was most imminent, and the canal, owing to the increasing pressure of the water, threatened to burst its bounds and submerge the place to the great terror of the inhabitants, and while the engineers were sinking boats full of stones to strengthen the bank in the menaced part, M. Dupont, who was looking on, shrugged his shoulders, a gesture common with him, and said, "That will do nothing towards staying the force of the stream." Turning away, he soon returned, threw a handful of medals into the water, and went home quite at ease as to the safety of the town, which in fact was saved, thanks to the unexpected resistance of that part of the dyke. And here we cannot but notice that M. Dupont had not only faith that God could and would, if He so pleased, work a miracle. Such is the belief, accompanied with more or less of hope and confidence in individual cases, of all devout Catholics. But his hope was *always* confidence. There was nothing of the merely hopefully expectant in him, still less of the

tentative. He was quite sure he was going to have what he asked for, and, we must add, he seems almost invariably to have got it. One day, in the intimacy of close friendship, he was led to say that, with a medal of St. Benedict in his hand, he would engage to stop a locomotive coming towards him at full speed. And who can presume to affirm that God might not have accorded even this wonder to the faith of His servant and the intercession of that glorious saint? God, if we may permit ourselves to use such an expression, does not like to disappoint those who place their full trust in Him.

Many certainly will say that M. Dupont was always ready to believe in supernatural intervention. We do not care to deny it; with him such intervention, instead of being a very improbable occurrence, was very probable, and we do not require the same amount of rigid demonstration for what we consider as *prima facie* extremely likely as for what we reckon to be possible, indeed, but in each case most unlikely. Accordingly, M. Dupont was not the man for believing in mere extraordinary coincidences. Where others might have had recourse to this mode of explanation, he in his simplicity saw only the finger of God. Living as he habitually did in the divine presence, and breathing what we may call a supernatural atmosphere, he saw the direct intervention of Providence in all things, and scarcely drew a line between the different modes of that intervention. Whether he beheld It sustaining the regular order of nature, or exalting purely natural causes to an unusual degree of potency, resulting in some merciful cure or deliverance, or, again, temporarily suspending the action of natural causes altogether, thus producing a palpable miracle,

## M. DUPONT.

he still saw his Father at work in all these different modes, one as easy to Him as another ; even as the Centurion—of whose faith the remarkable expression is used that Jesus “ marvelled ” at it—was convinced that nothing was difficult to Him, since everything yielded Him obedience, even as did his own soldiers and servants to himself : “ I say to one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” \* So it was, then, with Léon Dupont. And not only did he see his Father at work in all things, but it was a joy to him to behold His power thus revealed, and the more strikingly it was manifested the greater was his joy.

“ It cannot be denied,” says his friend M. Léon Aubineau, “ that he loved marvels ; his heart expanded amongst them with delight, and this without any astonishment and with an admirable simplicity. The most surprising never surprised him. He took an extreme and an unaffected pleasure in them. The holy man, in short, never laughed so heartily as when he witnessed some splendid manifestation of Providence.” It will be seen, then, that his was no vulgar love of the marvellous, but differed from it altogether, since marvels were to him no marvels at all, but the clearest and most intelligible things in the world. If, however, any are still disposed to join in M. Boullay’s criticism, and tax the “ holy man ” of Tours with having “ too much faith,” we would only say, the event justified his confidence. Read on, and you will join the good Abbé in his better mood, and say, “ We cannot have too much faith. M. Dupont was a saint. Let us imitate him ! ”

\* St. Luke vii. 8. 9.

## CHAPTER VII.

## LA SALETTE.

IN consequence of what has been related concerning the work of reparation required by Sister Saint-Pierre, frequent communication had been established between her and M. Dupont. He marked with intense interest the dealings of God with this privileged soul, and associated himself joyfully with her favourite devotions, particularly with that which had the Infant Jesus for its object. While the Carmelites were lodging near the Cathedral until their monastery in the Rue des Ursulines should be ready for their reception, the Sister filled the office of portress in the interior of the house, and M. Dupont often came to undertake her little commissions, and recommend himself to her prayers. She used to make up small *sachets* containing the text of the Gospel read on the feast of the Circumcision, which speaks of the name of Jesus given to the Divine Infant. M. Dupont aided her in making many of these copies, and in distributing them. They were popularly called, "The Little Gospel of Sister Saint-Pierre," and, when carried to the sick, were the occasion of not a few striking graces both of bodily cure and of conversion. The Carmelite nun, on her side, held the servant of God in high veneration, and interested herself in all that concerned him. We find her writing to him at the time when Henriette was preparing to make her first communion, and the anxious father had begged her to offer up in his child's behalf a touching prayer which he had sent her. After confessing her unworthiness with much humility,



she adds, "But I will pray Mary and Joseph to offer my prayer, and to offer this very dear child to the Holy Child Jesus as His spouse, so that the day of her first communion may be as the day of her betrothal to the Heavenly Bridegroom;" and she then proceeds to make a modest request herself in the name of the Infant Jesus; viz., that M. Dupont would give her three candles to burn in honour of the Holy Family to obtain the accomplishment of his wishes. "This Divine Infant," she says, "loves these little illuminations very much; He granted to this innocent and simple devotion a very great grace in the case of Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament. Our good Reverend Mother has often given us the means of performing it, but at this moment I am very poor."

Many proofs might be adduced of the familiarity and intimacy of the relations which subsisted between M. Dupont and the Carmel. When the nuns had to move into their monastery in the Rue des Ursulines, he acted quite as their man of business, if one might not rather say their servant, going and coming from the one house to the other, carrying images and other fragile objects. He also made his house a temporary depôt for all that appertained to the service of their chapel. The sacred vessels and the most precious reliquaries of the community remained for some time in his *salon*, just in the place now occupied by the oratory of the Holy Face. While this friend of the Carmel was occupied with all that was passing in the interior of their cloister, and especially with the revelations made to Sister Saint-Pierre, she herself had never ceased since 1843 to beseech the Lord to deign to choose His instruments for the accomplishment of the designs of which He had made her the depositary;



for that she, a poor and obscure religious, could do nothing, and ardently desired to remain for ever unknown in the concealment suitable to her vocation and still more to her incapacity. The year of 1846 had now more than half run out, and soon a marvellous event was to take place which, in the mind of M. Dupont, had a close connection with the supernatural communications made to the Carmelite nun. He could not but think, indeed, that she had a prescience of the Apparition of La Salette, for early in the September of that year, when about to set off for Saint-Servan in Brittany, where he occasionally took Henriette for the good of her health, having gone to the Carmelite convent to receive the commissions of the Prioress, who had relatives at Saint-Malo, and the conversation turning on Sister Saint-Pierre, she mentioned that our Lord had lately told the Sister that His Mother had spoken to men of His anger, which she desired to appease, and that, full of compassion, she had descended on the earth. "Have confidence in her, He said."

M. Dupont took a note on the spot in pencil, and when, on the 22d of October, he received a copy of the Curé of Corps' first letter telling of the Apparition of the Blessed Virgin at La Salette, he saw herein a confirmation of the words of Sister Saint-Pierre, who in mysterious language had seemed to announce what was in a few days to be verified, as if it had already occurred. His friends the Carmelites, whom he was the first to inform of the miraculous apparition, entirely coincided with him, and regarded it as a striking confirmation given to the work of reparation for which the Sister had been pleading. The mission entrusted to the two shepherd children was evidently identical with

hers. The Sister herself called them "the holy Virgin's two little trumpets," and gave heartfelt thanks to God on their account. Now the work of reparation was going to have its permanent tribune and its visible altar, the blessed summit of that mountain on which the feet of the Mother of God had rested, and which had thus become consecrated by her presence. On the other hand, Providence had made use of an illustrious bishop to imprint a regular form on the work of reparation; the Church had adopted, recommended, and enriched it with special favours. When Sister Saint-Pierre heard of the canonical erection of the Arch-confraternity, full of joy, she exclaimed, "My mission on earth is finished. I shall now die." It was her *Nunc Dimittis*, for on the 8th of July, 1848, she passed away, offering herself as a victim for the salvation of France. M. Dupont accompanied her mortal remains to the cemetery of St. Jean-des-Coups, where they were interred. From that time it was his custom to go often to pray at this revered Sister's tomb. Near to the spot where she lay was the grave of Henriette, whom her father had followed to her last resting-place six months previous. He used to pass from the one to the other, recommending to them both the affairs which he had at heart.\*

With his characteristic faith and his fixed ideas as to the need of reparation, M. Dupont never doubted for a moment concerning the Apparition at La Salette. He himself relates some facts which strongly corroborated the truth of the severe menaces addressed to France on the holy mountain. During the stay in

\* Three years later, when the cemetery was removed outside the walls, M. Dupont caused the remains of Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre to be exhumed and conveyed to her convent.

Brittany which he made that autumn, he had occasion to notice the sudden invasion of the potato disease, attacking whole fields in a single night and rendering their produce totally unfit for food. When he returned to Tours complaints were already being made respecting the dearness of bread, and the word "famine" passed ominously from mouth to mouth. While he was relating to the wife of the Prefect, Mme. d'Entraigues, the particulars of the recent apparition and the threat that the corn should rot, she exclaimed, "This explains to me the letter I have just received from the Curé of my parish in Berry." The letter in question was to inform her that, having unlocked the store of corn which had been laid by for the poor, in order to make, as she had directed, a distribution to those in need, he had found all the wheat mouldy and spoilt. M. Dupont was among the earliest to make a pilgrimage to the mountain, which he accomplished in the following July in the company of a good priest of Grenoble, M. Dombey, who has related how he enlivened the way with spiritual discourse, never wanting in that salt which gave it so agreeable a flavour. At Corps the party, five in number, were received by the Sisters of Providence, with whom the two children had been placed. They were allowed to see and converse with them freely, and were much pleased with their candour and simplicity. The nuns said, however, that they had much difficulty in teaching them their prayers and parts of the catechism.

The pilgrims spent four hours on the mountain, the children being with them. At that time there were only three little crosses marking the three stations of the Blessed Virgin; the path on which her sacred feet had trod was still clothed with verdure. M. Dupont ques-

tioned the children minutely, and listened to the narrative of each, which was such as they had always given it, the Blessed Virgin having charged them to pass it on to her people. He examined the locality very carefully and, amongst other questions which he put to Mélanie, he asked her how the Blessed Virgin held her hands. "Quite hidden in her sleeves," was the girl's reply, which she accompanied with a descriptive gesture. M. Dupont silently drew the conclusion that the hand which hides itself does not give ; whereas when, in later years, he heard the details of the Apparition of Lourdes, where the Blessed Virgin had her hands open, he saw in this a sign of liberality and of a profusion of graces. There were other pilgrims present on the mountain, all filled with devotion save one, who set himself in opposition, and disbelieved or affected to disbelieve the prodigy entirely. Among the pilgrims was the Abbé Faivre, a zealous missionary of Saint-Claude ; this good priest began to discuss the matter with the caviller, who, to prove his point, was trying to bewilder the children with absurd suppositions. In the midst of the argument a voice from the crowd called out to the missionary, "Father, preach to us ! preach to us !" The opponent said, "No, it is not permitted to preach here. Monseigneur has forbidden that." "If Monseigneur has forbidden to preach here," rejoined the priest, "he has not forbidden us to pray ;" and he forthwith fell on his knees before the cross which marked the spot of the Apparition, and made a beautiful act of reparation for the blasphemies and violation of the Sunday's rest which were drawing down upon France the weight of divine justice. All had prostrated themselves, and the opponent saw himself the only one standing in the middle of a kneeling

crowd, so, at last, he felt ashamed, and ended by bending his knees along with the rest, to the great joy of the pilgrims, especially of M. Dupont.

The faith and humility of the holy man greatly edified all who saw him. "How many kisses," says the Abbé Dombey, "did he not bestow on that blessed earth! You ought to have seen him creeping on his knees along the path which the Holy Virgin had followed, pressing his lips and his forehead against it, plucking the green grass and picking up small stones as mementoes, drinking with delight of the fountain which, dry until the day of the Apparition, has never since ceased to flow, and the water of which has been sent to all parts of the world to work wonders through the patronage of Mary." The pilgrims, the same good priest tells us, all conversed together like old friends and brothers, and tears of joy and happiness were on their faces as they left the sacred spot. "We descended the mountain," continues M. Dombey, "like the Apostles from Thabor, and the *good brother* said to me, 'Write down in your memorandum book, The pilgrim who has come a hundred and eighty leagues has said, I will return.' Later, writing sometimes to the good pilgrim at Tours, I reminded him of his promise; but he replied he was 'the pilgrim stuck fast in the mire and the servant of the Holy Face,' so was no longer at his own disposal." On their return journey the two friends visited the Grande Chartreuse, whose great woods, rocks, and cavernous grottoes, but, above all, the penitent life of the angels in human form who peopled this solitude, spoke to the heart of the pious pilgrim and made a deep impression on him. He was greatly edified, and drank in large refreshment of spirit from all he saw and heard here and at every other

stage of this joyous pilgrimage, which seemed providentially designed as a sweet cordial to invigorate him for sustaining the sharp sorrow which was so soon to pierce his heart.

But, if he received edification, so did he constantly and all unconsciously give it. It was, so to say, the perfume of holiness which he exhaled. Among other testimonies we have that of M. Orceel, Superior of the great Seminary at Grenoble, who afterwards would often ask for news of that "good Christian of the first century," and, again, of the Curé of Corbelin, who wrote, "Since that Sunday of happy memory, when he served my Mass, I have had a greatly increased devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar." The Curé of Ars seems to have known him at once by intuition. The interview of these two servants of God was very remarkable, and reminds the Abbé Janvier of the meeting of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. M. Dupont himself relates how he had made this journey for the purpose of having a conversation with M. Vianney, for whom he had long entertained the highest veneration. But how to get at him through the crowd of people who pressed upon him on each side as he passed out of the church? The Curé of Ars was unacquainted with M. Dupont, he had never seen him before, yet immediately he singled him out and fixed his eye upon him. He stopped and went straight up to him, and contemplated him awhile with a look at once sweet and penetrating; then, with a smile, he raised his eyes aloft and, joining his hands, he said, "O my dear friend, how well it will be with us to find ourselves one day in Heaven, singing the praises of our God!" "That was enough for me," added M. Dupont gaily; "I retired quite satisfied, lay-

ing up in my heart the good word of the holy Curé."

M. Dupont returned from his pilgrimage thoroughly convinced of the validity of the proofs establishing the truth of the Apparition. He himself firmly believed in it before he had the opportunity of making this examination, but he now possessed a mass of evidence which was not merely an additional satisfaction to himself, but which he could lay before others to meet the objections urged by the incredulous; and this, he says in a letter to a friend, was one of his reasons for desiring to visit the mountain in person. In the same letter he gives a summary of these evidences, amongst which the children themselves take a prominent place, their whole behaviour being unaccountable on any other supposition than the veracity of their story and the reality of the commission which they had received. Threats, promises, proffered bribes, all were powerless to silence them; nothing could affect the independent bearing of these children, who, he feels assured, were animated by the Spirit of God when, without betraying the least embarrassment, or showing the slightest satisfaction after confounding their interrogators, they replied to the most puzzling and insidious questions. Troubling themselves not one whit with the results of their mission, they were no sooner able to disengage themselves from the business than they both became again poor little, simple, ignorant peasants, just like any other children of their class. It is superfluous to observe that M. Dupont's testimony in this respect to the behaviour of Maximin and Mélanie has been abundantly confirmed by others.

He had the greatest confidence in the miraculous water of La Salette, and gave and sent to friends



little bottles of it without number. He prepared them all himself, filled them, and corked them. Whatever he did for God—and which of his actions, great or small, was done with any other intention?—was carried out in a most practical manner down to the least details. All was done energetically, but with the greatest quietness. No eagerness, no hurry, but he kept on at his employment thinking of God, and always bent upon combating Satan. It was curious to see him thus occupied, with his table, chimney-piece, and secretaire all covered with little bottles which he was filling one after the other, trying the corks, cutting and paring them, and satisfying himself that not a drop of the precious fluid could escape; in short, using more scrupulous care than does a chemist in preparing his medicines. If any one surprised him all intent upon this work, and asked him what he was about, “I am preparing my artillery,” he said; “and it is of sovereign potency,” he would add, laughing. After which he would sally forth with his pockets stuffed with these munitions of war; he took them to the sick; he gave them to those who had confidence in their virtue, and offered them to those who did not think of asking for them. He was thus preluding another and a greater propaganda in which he was later to embark, but he always remained faithful to his purpose of distributing the water of La Salette, for it was not in his nature to abandon any devotion which he had once embraced. So, when his time became entirely taken up, as we shall see, with a distribution of another kind, he handed over that of the La Salette water to the Convent of the Presentation at Tours, himself always paying for the whole outlay incurred.

He long continued to keep up communication by letter with his travelling companions of July, 1846, and particularly with Mademoiselle Louise Dupont, a pious and intelligent lady, not a relative, but whom he always addressed as his sister, probably because of the identity of name. Eight years later we find him, in a letter to her, dwelling with sweet recollection on the details of that happy journey, and lamenting that he was only able to make it again in spirit. "I often reflect, however," he says, "that I do not the least deserve to be favoured so wonderfully a second time." We find the like regrets renewed in other letters to his fellow-pilgrims. The anniversaries of the Apparition were very dear to him; he celebrated them with special honour, and no one experienced more triumphant joy than did he when the Bishop of Grenoble, after a judicial inquiry, declared himself openly in favour of its miraculous character. The delight he felt at this approbation, pronounced in 1848, was further enhanced when Monseigneur had concluded the negotiation for the purchase of the ground made sacred by the presence of Mary. Her apparition was a source of hope and confidence to him, which not even the progress of infidelity in France at that epoch availed to damp. He thought that the Immaculate Mother of the Saviour would not have brought this message to her poor children on earth if she had known that they were to receive it only to plunge deeper into crime, and draw down on themselves the terrible vials of God's wrath. "And so," he says, "I take to hoping on, and hoping much. It is impossible," he adds, "but that ten just men must be found in France, and that in the land once called the land of saints"—he

is writing to an English Catholic lady—"ten saints also should not be found."

Nevertheless, when he beheld the desolating calamities which afflicted France so frequently at that period, his spirit was deeply moved, and he said that the dear little children had only prophesied too truly in announcing speedy calamities if there was no return to God. "And as yet, although we are surrounded with the dead and the dying, there is not," he exclaims, "the least turning to God!" He wrote thus in December, 1846, just after a disastrous inundation of the Loire, and in the midst of the sickness and scarcity which it entailed. On his return from his pilgrimage, his first care had been to procure the establishment at Tours of a sanctuary which should be a centre of devotion to Our Lady of La Salette. The modest chapel of the Convent of the Purification at once occurred to him. He felt much interest in this small community, which had been founded by his friend and confessor, the Abbé Pasquier, in 1834, with the object of making reparation to the Majesty of God, outraged by profanations of the Sunday. He had already largely aided it with his alms, and continued to maintain intimate relations with the Suprioress, who, at his instigation, applied to ecclesiastical authority for permission to place the humble sanctuary which it was in contemplation to rebuild, under the invocation of Our Lady of La Salette. When all was satisfactorily arranged in 1856, he presented the community with a picture of the Apparition, which was placed in the sanctuary close to the altar, permission being granted for its exposition and veneration. Such was the commencement of public devotion to Our Lady of La Salette among the faithful of Tours. M. Dupont

felt, however, the need of an association to foster and confirm it, and conferred on the subject with some grave and pious ecclesiastics, who came to the resolution that the Archbishop, Mgr. Guibert, should be solicited to authorise the establishment of a confraternity. The prelate received the petition favourably, and on the 19th of September, 1857, he erected the Confraternity of Notre Dame Réconciliatrice in the chapel of the Purification, which was later affiliated to the Archconfraternity of the same name on the holy mountain.

All this we must consider as the work of M. Dupont, who had promoted the presentation of the petition to the bishop. The increasing affluence of worshippers during the novenas which annually precede the 19th of September had rendered an enlarged space more than ever indispensable. As soon, therefore, as ecclesiastical sanction had been obtained, M. Dupont hastened to place a large sum at the disposal of the Superioress for the purchase of the additional ground and the construction of the edifice. The new chapel was blessed and inaugurated by Mgr. Guibert in 1860. From that day the devotion of the faithful for our Lady of Reconciliation rapidly increased. The associates held monthly meetings, and M. Dupont assisted at their spiritual exercises as often as he could. He made the chapel a present of a much valued relic, a portion of the skull of St. Louis, and would have desired that the feast of that glorious saint, for whom he had so great a devotion, should have been every year preceded by a *triduum* and celebrated with much solemnity, but political circumstances were not favourable to his pious project. Devotion to Our Lady of La Salette had knit close ties between the holy man and this community of the

Purification, a union which subsisted as long as he lived. Shortly before his death he sent the Superiress a bottle of water from the mountain of the Apparition, which he had brought back at the time he made his pilgrimage. The date was written with his own hand, and the water, in spite of the lapse of time, was still fresh and pure.

He preserved a special devotion to Our Lady of La Salette during his whole life, and that even when all his time and attention seemed given to the worship of the Holy Face. In his eyes, indeed, there was such an intimate connection between the outraged Face of Jesus and that of our Lady shedding tears, that for him the two devotions were as one. Our Lady of La Salette seemed herself to have united them by having, when she appeared, a crucifix on her bosom. A confraternity in honour of Our Lady of La Salette was viewed by him as the complement of that of Saint-Dizier, both having as their object reparation for the offences committed against God by blasphemy and profanation of the Sunday. They had, it is true, different origins and employed different means: the first was grounded on the fact of the Apparition, and was addressed to Mary Reconciliatrix, the Mother of Dolours; the second drew its origin from the revelations made to Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre, and addressed itself especially to the worship of the Holy Face, outraged in the Passion; but M. Dupont conceived that these two devotions could march side by side, lending each other mutual support, and this fully explains how it was that, notwithstanding the almost exclusive attention which we shall find him giving to the Holy Face and the work of reparation, he nevertheless all his life long laboured to extend the *cultus*

of Our Lady of Reconciliation honoured on the mountain of La Salette.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### HENRIETTE DUPONT.

A FEW months after his return from La Salette, M. Dupont had to pass through a very severe trial in the loss of his dear and only child. God, we may believe, ordained this affliction to purify him still further and raise him to a higher degree of perfection, making him thus a more worthy instrument for carrying out the great work for which He designed him. Henriette had now attained her fifteenth year. She was tall, very pretty and attractive, gifted with an intelligence far beyond her age, but of a very delicate constitution, inherited from her mother. She won the hearts of all by her graces of mind and engaging ways; what wonder, then, if she was petted by all who came near her, and particularly by her old grandmother, who could absolutely refuse her nothing? The consequence was that, with all her amiable qualities, and possessing what was better still, a good and charitable heart and very pious dispositions, she was, if the truth must be told, something like a spoilt child—something like to one, yet not essentially spoilt, notwithstanding this over-indulgence, for she was never humoured in what was really wrong, and was habitually obedient to her father. Nevertheless she was by nature variable, rather wilful at times, and often gave way to childish caprices, which even he was not always successful in

checking. And, indeed, although on certain points he was immovable as a rock, that is, where he considered anything as sinful or likely to lead to evil, it must be confessed that in other respects he was the most indulgent of parents. Perhaps that was part of his system, rather than any result of fond paternal weakness. At any rate, it is certain that he laboured earnestly at the child's religious education. This he would have done whatever had been her disposition, but he perceived in the promise of rich mental gifts and many personal graces, which Henriette early gave, a still higher necessity for instilling into her the strongest religious principles and cultivating sentiments of piety in her heart. He already saw the world in the distance, and dreaded its dangers for one who was sure to be the object of its baneful flattery.

"The poor child," he writes when she was only seven years old, "will respond, I hope, to the desires which I entertain to see her walk in the safe paths of evangelical perfection. It would be difficult, I think, to secure her salvation short of adopting this way. I dread already for her the dangers of the world. That the good God will come to my help, I have the fullest confidence." And so He did, but not in the way the father was then contemplating. He hoped that his child would develop a religious vocation, but in this he was to be disappointed. Nevertheless, Henriette was very accessible to the truths of faith and to sentiments of piety; and it was by this side of her character she could be influenced and controlled. Mme. de Lignac, the prudent Superioress to whose care the little girl was consigned when her family settled at Tours, knew well how to avail herself of this good element to counteract the wayward disposition and



fantastic humour which the child at times displayed. A promise to tell her something of the Life and Passion of our Lord, if she would be a good girl for a few days, would engage her to make some sincere efforts at improvement. Mme. de Lignac relates how on one occasion, when she was quite a little thing, and she was describing to her the sufferings of our Lord, Henriette was much affected. "This dear child," says the Superioress, "during my narrative was quite a subject for a painter's brush; hanging, as it were, upon my lips full of emotion, she shed genuine tears, and from time to time exclaimed, 'What! what! they did that to Him, did they?'" The father was charmed at this precocious piety and lost no opportunity of cultivating and fostering it when she was at home with him. He was permitted also, by an exceptional favour, to see his child daily, even when at school. One day the father of another pupil came to solicit a like privilege from Mme. de Lignac, but she told him that this was impossible, such a practice being contrary to their rule. "But, Madame, I know for certain that you make an exception in the case of Mlle. Henriette Dupont, who sees her father every day." "That is true, Sir," replied the Superioress. "Every morning M. Dupont assists at our Mass and communicates. After his thanksgiving, he goes into our parlour and blesses his daughter without addressing to her a single word. If, Sir, you will act as M. Dupont does, you shall see your daughter every day."

As far as her age permitted, he strove to inoculate her with those maxims of spirituality which were the rule of his own life. Henriette did not by any means turn a deaf ear to these lessons, she would even appropriate them in a way and produce them herself upon

occasion. Of course they could not have taken as yet any very deep root, but her adhesion was sincere so far as it went, for she was too frank and unaffected to assume what she did not feel or believe herself to feel. Here is a curious specimen of her infant piety, written when she was nine years old to her father's favourite god-daughter, who was considerably her senior. "My dear great sister, I particularly like letters which speak of the good God. I will remember your *Souvenez-vous* (the *Memorare*). I will say it every morning after my prayers. As when St. Scholastica talked to St. Benedict, her brother, he always said to her that we must talk of God or hold our tongues, for it is much better to talk of God, so, my dear L——, I think that you too prefer talking of God. Papa has copied out for me a great many thoughts of the saints. Henriette Dupont." Had she not added the closing words, we should still have had no doubt whence she had derived her characteristic remark.

The letter gives us an insight into his system of education. We see him here endeavouring to form the young mind of his child after the model of his own; that is, not merely to bring up a good Christian, but to train a saint. It was not in his character to aim lower, and who can say that he would have been acting more prudently by attempting less? On the contrary, we have reason to believe that he was led to do what was best for this soul, which was to tarry so short a time on earth; and, considering the nature, at once volatile and impulsive, which he had to deal with, he must be reckoned to have had considerable success. Henriette made her first communion at eleven years of age, and, to all appearance, in very good dispositions. Soon afterwards she had a dangerous illness, as we gather

from a letter of the Capitaine Marceau to her father, in which he says, "Tell Mlle. Henriette that, since I have been deceived in both the hopes and fears I entertained of having soon an additional patroness with the good God, I count upon not being forgotten by her in her prayers."

With the double view of benefiting the health of his daughter and of nurturing her piety, M. Dupont used often to take her about with him on his pilgrimages, or when he went to visit friends or transact business in Brittany, that most Catholic province of France. Every summer he sent her with her grandmother to Saint-Servan that she might take sea-baths, joining them later in order to take what he called his "baths of faith." He visited several families in the town accompanied by Henriette, but always having his eye upon her, noting her smallest actions. A member of one of these pious families, now a religious in America, has given an account of his behaviour in the house of her parents, and, no doubt, all his other visits were more or less of a similar character. "My father's mother," says the good Sister, "used to listen eagerly to his countless stories of pilgrimages, conversions, miracles, which we young ones used often to think rather long and too grave; for religious subjects were his sole topic of conversation. Even while waiting for our next neighbour's door to be opened, he used to get my brother to join in the Aves of his rosary, which he kept in his sleeve that he might not lose a minute." She tells us that he used to watch them out of the corner of his eye, to see that they did not forget themselves, and lose thereby the spirit of recollection with which he used to endeavour to inspire them; and one day he was by no means pleased when he found them playing

at cards, Henriette, who was of the party, being very eager at the game and highly delighted. When he walked with his daughter in the streets of Saint-Servan, he made a practice of picking up all the pins which he spied lying on the ground. Sometimes the couple would meet a party of foppish young men whistling and showing themselves off. Upon which he would say to Henriette, "See, my daughter; those young men have empty heads, full of nothing but wind, so they have to get rid of it;" and then he returned to picking up pins, his eyes on the ground, but his spirit communing with God. At the end of the season, when he returned to town, he took all his hoard of pins to the Little Sisters of the Poor, certainly a most characteristic way of providing them with that useful article.

When Henriette wished to visit the Mont Saint-Michel, which is not far from Saint-Servan, her father insisted on her going as on a pilgrimage, and consequently keeping silence on the road. "She made up for it," says the Religious, "when she was back again, by relating to us all the adventures of her journey." "This dear child," adds the same Religious, "loved pleasure and enjoyed life; she caused much uneasiness to her father. He dreaded all the dangers of the world for this ardent and joyous soul." Yes, Henriette certainly enjoyed pleasure with a keen zest; and now, when she was approaching woman's estate, she looked out smilingly at the world through the windows of her innocent soul, and the world was ready to smile at her in return. Oh, how her father dreaded for her that false smile! Even the admiration and applause which his child's graces and intelligence drew from a select circle of friends, the expression of which

is usually so dear to a parent's heart, were to him a source of very qualified pleasure. It would appear that she was one of the most advanced pupils at the Ursuline School. In the month of August, 1847, there was a sort of literary festival at the Pensionnat. Some scenes out of Racine's *Athalie* were to be acted. The representation was strictly private, none but the nuns, the boarders, the curé of the parish, and the superiors of the community being present. This was sufficient, however, to form quite a little audience for the young performers. M. Dupont was the sole layman invited, the exception being made because his daughter was to take the part of Athalie. Anxious to attire herself as became her character of queen, Henriette begged from her father some of the ornaments which had belonged to her mother, and the appearance she made was very striking. Add to which, she acquitted herself of her part with so much grace as to render the evening quite a triumph to her.

But are triumphs good for any one, spiritually speaking? Doubtless the fond father asked himself inwardly this question, or, rather, with him there could be no question on the subject. Triumphs, however, of a far more dangerous kind than any which could be the result of this little harmless display must certainly await his child in the world. Her beauty, in conjunction with her mental gifts and graces, could not fail to insure them. How provide against these perils? There was but one safeguard, upon which as yet the anxious father felt that it would be presumptuous to reckon, and the more his daughter advanced in age the more was he disquieted regarding her future. "The poor child," he writes about this time, "is now in her fifteenth year, and, as far as I can judge, the good God

has not yet spoken these words to her heart: 'The world is so dangerous that it ought to be dreaded; the hidden life in God is so sweet that you ought to aspire to it.' Let us pray, then. Oh! do pray." He begged prayers of all his good friends. In another letter, written after his return with Henriette from a tour of united recreation and devotion, he says, "If it be God's will, all these journeys will have done my poor daughter good; as yet I do not observe anything. Pray, and get others to pray, that grace may superabound, and, above all, the super-eminent grace of a faithful correspondence. What would I not give to see her heart possessed by a strong and solid taste for piety! Faith is not enough in order to escape the dangers of her age. We must combat the devil with other weapons. You know well what we ought to ask of our Lord for the good of a soul."

Many a father and mother would have been more than satisfied with a daughter like Henriette. She was good and innocent-hearted, and capable of warm devotional feelings. Her love of pleasure and of amusement would have been deemed quite natural and excusable at her age; parents of that sort,—and many such there are even among very worthy folk,—will say, "We must remember that we, too, were once young, and liked all these things ourselves; you cannot set an old head on young shoulders;" and so on. M. Dupont's memory was not short, but the conclusions he drew from his recollections were very different. He looked both higher and deeper than do these ordinary Christians. What he desired to discern was a call to perfection, and some signs of that engrossing love of God which can alone avail to exclude from the young heart the love of earthly pleasures and fortify it against



the spell of the world's attractions. But what he most longed for was to see his child developing symptoms of a religious vocation. With a disposition like Henriette's, however, there seemed little ground for any such hope. Yet it was ever present to him, and he let slip a word one day which must have betrayed it to her, supposing she had not previously divined it. He had gone to the Convent of the Purification with his daughter, who was charged with a little present for the nuns. When the Superioress had come to the parlour grate to see them, "Now, Henriette," said her father, "give these ladies what you have brought." The young girl with a joyous and radiant smile forthwith displayed a pretty white rabbit, which she hastened to convey through the turning-box into the Reverend Mother's hands. M. Dupont looked on, silently watching her action. Then, he said, all of a sudden, "How happy it would make me, my child, to see you pass through also!" But Henriette had really no wish to follow her rabbit. So strong, however, in the father was the desire of seeing a desire for the religious life dawn in her mind, which alone he believed would be a safe haven for her young soul, that he one day told a religious that if, to insure his dear child's salvation, it had been needful to build a monastery, he would gladly have dug the foundation and brought all the stones for it with his own hands.

Several honourable and excellent families began to think of her for their sons. One of these actually made overtures to her father through an ecclesiastic who possessed his confidence. The marriage would have been suitable and advantageous in every point of view. The ecclesiastic charged with the commission



relates how at this proposal M. Dupont assumed a look of inward recollection, and then, using a gesture habitual with him, stretched out his hands and raised his eyes to heaven with an expression which the priest said he never should forget, and which suggested to him the idea that he was offering his daughter to God and making the sacrifice of her; so that when, not many days after, he heard that death had struck down the young girl, he asked himself whether, like another Jephthe, the father had not immolated his daughter. Relating his feelings when this communication was made to him, M. Dupont says, "It was for me like the stab of a dagger!" Doubtless it was so to him, who in his heart had offered his child to be a pure spouse of the Immaculate Lamb. The proposition was renewed and pressed several times, friends also speaking to him in favour of the projected alliance. While one of these was urging his acceptance, he said with a calm dignity, "Now I am going up to Calvary." The Calvary which he was to ascend was not, however, what he anticipated.

M. Dupont assuredly loved his daughter as tenderly as ever father did, nay, he even reproached himself with having, from an excess of tenderness, yielded sometimes to her little childish whims, a weakness to which, as has been observed, his good mother was habitually prone. But there was one point on which he never gave way. He never would allow Henriette to be taken to places of worldly amusement, theatres in particular. Even where there was nothing represented which could be called bad, he thought theatrical spectacles perilous and hurtful, tending as they do to excite the imagination and passions of the young. Visiting a relative during the holidays, when

amusement was the order of the day with the young people, one of the family, while M. Dupont was out, indiscreetly spoke to Henriette of some theatrical entertainment to which she might very innocently go, and which would divert her extremely. The young girl clapped her hands with glee at the thought, and, with the impetuosity which characterised all her desires, she rushed to meet her father as he came in, to beg his consent for her to go with her cousins to the play. He refused, and, notwithstanding her reiterated entreaties, was inflexible. He knew Henriette's nature well, and justly feared that this first gratification, in appearance harmless but forming a marked contrast with the simple, quiet family pleasures which alone she had hitherto tasted, would awaken in her the desire for similar joys of the same character and others still more dangerous, bringing with them intoxicating sensations which pave the way and lead to sin, from all which it would have been difficult to preserve her. But Henriette did not understand the denial, and, though habitually submissive to her father, it grieved and disappointed her exceedingly, so much so that she showed her sorrow by a gloomy sadness which lasted several days and affected her every word and action.

Here was a sort of revelation to the father, who saw in this exhibition of temper a proof that for his daughter the world would be even more full of snares than he had suspected. Under this impression he renewed his sacrifice. "My God," he inwardly said, "if Thou foreseest that she will one day stray from the right path, I consent that Thou shouldst deprive me of her, rather than I should behold her giving herself up to worldly vanities." This was, indeed, an heroic prayer, worthy of the faith of Abraham, and it was repeated

several times. God accepted it. An epidemic having made its appearance at the Ursuline school, Mme. de Lignac was obliged to send away her pupils for a short time. Henriette was overjoyed at this unexpected vacation, and did not conceal her pleasure. As she embraced Mme. de Lignac, when wishing her good-bye, she said gaily, "Fortunate sickness, which has obtained for us a week's holiday!" The poor child little knew what was in store for her, and that this holiday was for her to end in the grave. She left the *Pennsionnat* at half-past four in the evening, and the very next day the fatal malady declared itself. And now might be seen the inestimable value of her previous pious training, for, as if she had a presentiment of death from the beginning, she at once turned with her whole thoughts and heart to God. There was a mobility of impressions in the young girl's nature which no doubt helped to facilitate this revolution, but we may well believe that, but for her antecedents, the change might have wanted much of its fulness, and something also of its sweetness.

Henriette had been taught from infancy the sublimest principles of evangelical perfection; she had been fed upon them; and, although they had not as yet borne the consistent fruit for which her father watched, they had never been put from her or rejected. She loved them, when she did not embrace them; they had been, as it were, playing about her heart and soliciting her acceptance, and by fits and starts she had even acted upon them. They were, therefore, nothing strange or new to her; moreover, she had ever had a living practical example of them by her side. And now, when she threw herself lovingly into the arms of her God, there was no regretful look towards the

world she was leaving. "I went to see her every day," says the *Mère de Lignac*, "and I always found in her the same love for our Lord which I had so often remarked in her. The day before she died, she received the Holy Viaticum; I was present. After she had made her thanksgiving, she reminded me of some words which had struck her forcibly in a retreat. 'Do you recollect,' she said, 'what the Father said? that all the gold and jewels of this world are common stones in comparison with the love of our Lord. Oh, how right He was! What are all these things? Our Lord! Oh, there is nothing but He! He is all, all, all!'" And here another observation naturally suggests itself. How much easier work does it often seem for grace to turn the young suddenly to God, and move them to a generous abandonment of every earthly attachment than the middle-aged, or even the aged, who yet have so little left to cling to! Yet the young heart has had no experience of the world's emptiness; all is smiling promise before it; while no one can have lived to a mature age, still less to an advanced period of life, without having obtained a practical knowledge of its insufficiency to fulfil the hopes it once held out, even when they have not had to bewail the bitter disappointment of those hopes. Nevertheless, though the world has played them false, it has obtained a hold upon them which it is hard to shake off. The world had no hold on poor Henriette's innocent soul; she had been looking at it admiringly, it is true, as one might at some bright landscape out of a window: that was all; and now that grace came to whisper a word at the supreme hour, no struggle was needed; she opened her eyes to the divine ray which beamed upon her, and knew, or, rather, felt in an instant—for she

knew it before—that the good God was infinitely better than all this fair show.

The malady which carried her off was fearfully rapid in its progress, and during those days and nights of anguish unspeakable the father exhibited a degree of heroism, so far above the powers of nature, that all who were near him at the time retained an ineffaceable impression of what they had witnessed. The Abbé Regnard declares that he might write a volume, if he were to relate all he saw that was beautiful and sublime during those five days. This is the testimony of a holy priest who knew M. Dupont intimately, and who never left him while he was going through this terrible trial. During his daughter's short illness, he received several signs that she was not to recover. One was the failure of the water of La Salette which, it is true, twice relieved some distressing symptoms in a remarkable manner, but no more. The father recognised herein a proof that, if the will of God had not been formally opposed thereto, Mary would have restored to him his child in spite of all the virulence of the malady. Another sign was that Sister Saint-Pierre, in whom he had so much confidence, did not encourage him to hope. He had asked the different religious communities in Tours to pray for his child's recovery, and the Carmelite nun was not, as may be readily believed, among the least fervent of the suppliants. She had not, indeed, needed M. Dupont's reiterated requests for her prayers, nevertheless she throughout manifested the conviction that Henriette would die. The reason she gave was that this cruel trial was to open the ways of sanctity to M. Dupont, and prepare him for the designs of God regarding him. Possibly she had some supernatural

knowledge of the event ; at any rate she had a very strong presentiment.

It was very touching to hear the father giving his commissions for Heaven to his dying child. He stood by the bed with one of her hands in his : " My daughter," he said, " you will soon appear before God ; you will see Him ; you will speak to Him. But, before all things, you will present to Him the recommendations which I am going to give you ; it is I, your father, who lay this command upon you, in the name of my paternal authority. You will pray for your father, your grandmother, for the members of your family"—here he named them all. " You will pray for all the good and pious persons who have cared for your education and health"—he named these also, reminding her particularly of the servants. " You will pray for the inhabitants of this town, for your friends and companions and acquaintances."—Here he paused a moment, and then resumed in a still more solemn manner : " You will pray for this excellent doctor who has attended you from your infancy, and has devotedly applied all his skill and exhausted all his science in this last malady without being able to relieve you ; you will pray for him when you are in the presence of God." The tone in which he uttered these words was deeply impressive. The young girl listened to him in silence, with a sweet and tranquil countenance, mutely signifying her acquiescence. All around were in tears, and Bretonneau himself was much affected. This eminent physician loved and esteemed M. Dupont, and, although it was now hopeless to attempt anything further to save the life of his daughter, he would not desert his friend during these last sad moments, but remained to the end. When Extreme Unction had



been administered the father rose from his knees, and, taking his child's hand, said, "Now, my daughter, that you have received so many graces, you are happy, are you not?" "Yes, Papa." "You regret nothing in leaving this wretched life, do you?" "Why, yes, I do, Papa." "What, my child?" "The leaving you." "Oh, no, my daughter, you are not leaving me. We shall not be separated. God is everywhere. You will be in His presence in Heaven, and will see Him; I here below shall be also with Him and, through Him, with you. Two walls separate us now. Yours is about to fall, mine will also one day fall; we shall then be united, and that for ever."

After Henriette had received the Last Sacraments, her father himself recited the prayers for those in their agony. Still holding her hand, and with a sublime expression of faith in his countenance and whole bearing, "Depart, Christian soul," he said, "depart. Remain no longer on this earth, where God is offended. Death is life; the world is death. Go, my daughter. You are about to see God. Tell Him what we feel and suffer at this moment. Tell Him that our sole desire is that He should be satisfied with us under this trial. I suffer; indeed, my heart is torn. But, my daughter, these are the pains of child-birth, I am bringing you forth for Heaven to-day. On earth, it is true, we bear God's image, but it is a rough image, merely sketched. In Heaven alone God finishes and perfects us. Go, my child, and do not forget my recommendations. I am still your father, and, in the name of my authority, I command you to say nothing to God till you have fulfilled my desires."

On the last night, two friends of M. Dupont, Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, wished to be near



him. Certainly he needed no one, he had God, and that was all to him. But if they could do nothing for him, the admirable spectacle of his faith in the midst of this crushing sorrow was to them most edifying. Occasionally he would for a moment leave the bedside of his dying daughter, where he, the disconsolate grandmother, and the faithful mulatto servant, Adèle, who had accompanied them from Martinique, had kept watch and tended her night and day, and go into the adjoining room, where his two friends were praying, in order to respond to their solicitude and satisfy their inquiries. "Those who approached him at that time," says one of these witnesses, "have never been able to forget that they then saw a Christian. There was, on his face, in his least words, and in all his actions, a union of generosity, grief, and peace of mind which was sublime, and baffled description."

Henriette's last moments were now approaching. M. Dupont, kneeling at the foot of her bed, held one of the physician's hands, while his eyes were fixed upon his daughter, and his lips softly murmured, "Doctor, she is going to see God! she is going to see God!" The doctor, an unhappy sceptic, but one who possessed a tender and good heart, could scarcely restrain his tears, and still the father, with a countenance at once radiant and sorrow-stricken, kept saying, "She is going to see God!" When, at length, Henriette gently breathed her last sigh, he turned towards M. Bretonneau with a heavenly serenity, and said, "Doctor, she sees God!" For a moment he remained immovable as a statue, then, rising from his knees, as in an ecstasy of supernatural joy, he recited—some say he intoned—the *Magnificat*. However this may be, his extraordinary selection of a song of jubilation

at that crisis of grief, and the voice of exultation with which he repeated it, so astonished and stupefied some present, who were imperfectly acquainted with him, that they fancied he was distraught, but the good doctor knew better, and could admire sincerely, if he could do no more. Strange, indeed, that he should witness such a deathbed, and see the miraculous power of grace in another's soul, and yet give it no entrance into his own, which, alas! remained closed to the light unto his dying day. Yet he always said, when alluding to what he had beheld that night, and speaking of his friend, "That was, indeed, the ideal of a Christian." What was remarkable in M. Dupont's behaviour was not his resignation—the poor, broken-hearted grandmother was herself a pattern of resignation—but his supernatural joy, and the heroic sacrifice which he had made, and continued to make to the last, of what was most dear to him on earth; for, if he prayed fervently that his child might be spared, it was a prayer after the mysterious pattern of our Lord's in the garden, "Father, let this chalice pass from Me," and never implied any revocation, not of his acceptance merely of that chalice, but of his own spontaneous offer to drink it.

There was one moment, and one only, when his exalted courage seemed about to forsake him; it was when he took a last look at the loved and lovely face which death as yet had not disfigured. He remained with his arms crossed, and his eyes riveted with the tenderest affection upon it; then his features were observed to alter, tears flowed from his eyes in streams, and he was on the point of bursting forth in sobs and sinking under his grief. But he suddenly recollected himself, and threw himself on his knees in prayer. When

he rose, his countenance was transfigured, and a ray of sweet consolation was beaming through his tears. "I was near being conquered," he said, "and yet my daughter is closer to me than she was;" and he again repeated what he had told her on her deathbed about the two walls of separation. From that instant he never betrayed even a momentary weakness. Mme. de Lignac, who went to see him as soon as she heard that Henriette was dead, found him admirably calm, sitting before a desk which supported a volume of the Holy Gospel, and reading with devotion the passages best suited to fortify him under his trial. To the numerous visitors who came to condole with him he used to point to the funeral couch of his daughter, and, quoting the words of the angel at the Sepulchre of the Risen Saviour, would say, "She is here no longer: *Quid quæritis viventem inter mortuos?*" \*

"Dear child," he said to the Abbé Regnard the day after her death, "she was on the eve of the battle. She desired to conquer, and remain pure in the world; but she felt her weakness, she feared lest she should be vanquished; and so she deserted and fled. I do not regard our Lord here as a judge, or a master, or even as a father; but as the good gardener who, coming into his garden, found a very beautiful white flower; and he gathered it lest it should be withered by the blast. In the midst of my grief," he added, "I feel a joy in my inmost soul which infinitely surpasses all the joys of earth." This image of the Divine Gardener gathering the flower pleased him much, and he had a little engraving made of our Lord under this touching emblem. To another friend he wrote, "Our poor little dear left us in a state of so much purity and

\* "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"—St. Luke xxiv. 5.

innocence that we were fain to follow her with the eyes of the spirit amongst those souls of which God has a chosen band ; souls called to their reward before the combat. It was on the eve of battle that the timid dove flew to take her place on high amongst the angels. Then I reflected that I now only acquired the true title of father when my child's salvation was secured. Are they fathers who in one way or another plunge their children into Hell ?" All those who knew M. Dupont best agreed in expressing their conviction that, in spite of his tender paternal love, he so dreaded the storms of life for his dear child that he had fervently begged of God to take away his treasure, and gather this, the one sweet flower in his garden, before the breath of the passions and contact with the world should have tarnished its freshness and its beauty. On the day of Henriette's funeral, her father sent to all the religious communities in Tours abundant alms, which he called his daughter's *corbeille de nocces*. The greater part of the dowry which he had destined for her was afterwards bestowed on the Little Sisters of the Poor.

During the first days after Henriette's death M. Dupont's house was like a sanctuary, whither people came to seek edification and feed devotion. The old grandmother, if she did not attain to the heroism of her son, was also very sweet and touching. If she could not have offered her darling to God, at any rate she bowed submissively and lovingly to His will. Writing to a friend a month later, M. Dupont mentions a trait in his child's character which, of course, specially endeared her both to him and to the fond grandmother. "She was not," he says, "satisfied with being good and lovable, but she liked to know that

she was loved ;” and then he mentions, in connection with this disposition, a comforting dream of Mme. de Lignac. The good religious did not relate it as a vision, but perhaps her guardian angel wished to console her by it. She dreamed, then, that Henriette appeared to her beaming with joy. “You seem happy,” said Mme. de Lignac. “Yes, I am happy ; they love me so much.” “Where it is question of love,” said her father, “it can be question only of Heaven, the bosom of eternal charity.” All his life long, M. Dupont continued to thank God for having called his daughter to Himself at a tender age, in her purity and innocence. “Oh ! how I bless God,” he exclaimed one day, when conversing with a religious about the extravagant dress of the women of the period, “that He called my daughter early out of the world.” Above all he rejoiced at the thought that she had died before she knew what was evil. “You will remember,” he writes, “the anguish which wrung my soul when I figured to myself the dangers of the world. I wished my daughter to be happy. Well, is she not happy now ? I understood, when closing her eyes, that paternity dates from that moment only when one could say to God,—Here is my child. Now I am persuaded that Henriette, clothed in her robe of innocence and fortified most providentially with the sacraments of the Church, has already seen my donation confirmed. How happy are those fathers whose children have preceded them ! How many graces does not innocency obtain, kneeling at the foot of God’s throne ! If under the old law fathers were inconsolable when by the death of a child they were deprived of the hope of the Messiah being born in their family, under the law of grace a father has the ineffable con-

solation of thinking that his virgin daughter becomes for ever the beloved spouse of Jesus. How true it is, then, that it is not for us to sorrow like those who have no hope beyond the grave! The grave! But since our Lord rose thence to life, it has become the place of our birth, the cradle of the first days of our eternity." "Do you know," he said one day to some one, smiling and looking up to heaven, "the pretty thought which has occurred to me about Henriette? She has been six years in Heaven; now, the day of our death is truly our birthday; so my little daughter is six years older than I am. In Paradise she will be my elder. Fancy," he added, rubbing his hands with a zest which it was cheering to see, "just fancy the effect of that when I shall arrive up there, should I still live some years longer. Why, she will be my mother, and I shall be as a child knowing nothing!"

Writing to a missionary in America just after Henriette's death, we find the same expression of joy at her removal before she had been tempted to sin. The one observation he makes on the recent loss of his child, after observing that she was just fifteen, is this: "She had done some good, and she was ignorant of evil. I bless His fatherly hand."

He had a simple grave-stone erected over her resting-place surmounted by a cross, with the name "Henriette" alone inscribed upon it. At its foot was a *prie-dieu* of beautiful white marble, and around it flowers bloomed at all seasons, and were lovingly cared for by the bereaved father. It was a great consolation to him to kneel and pray there, and this he did nearly every day alone, or in company with a god-daughter residing with him, until, as we shall see, his time was so entirely engrossed as to leave him



not a moment's leisure. God rewarded him, it would seem, for having made the heroic sacrifice of his daughter's companionship on earth by giving him many spiritual consolations while thus communing with her at her grave. He believed, indeed, that his innocent child obtained from God for himself and others several graces. "I find her there again," he says. "I talk to her, I ask her news from above. The first time I came to kneel on this freshly stirred earth, where that very morning she had been laid, oh, what it cost me ! All was over, I was alone, no one with me. Then I said to her, Now, Henriette, I am going to ask something of you. You know that culprit, condemned to die, who refuses to make his confession. This was the first grace my child obtained for me"—meaning the culprit's repentance—"and ever since, when I have anything difficult on my hands, I always refer the matter to her."

For the satisfaction of those who cannot reconcile themselves to seeing the natural feelings entirely absorbed in the supernatural, it may be added that this truly Christian father cherished every little memorial of his departed dear one ; for all that is sweet and pathetic in the natural tenderness of the heart was allied in him with the grand and triumphant energies of faith. The supernatural did not obscure the natural. We know, of course, that the highest sanctity does not suppress or eradicate the human affections, although there have been saints who were divinely called to trample on and disregard them, but, with a pardonable weakness, most of us love to catch a glimpse of these affections. In the "holy man of Tours" we are presented with an example which may be said to satisfy every exigency of the sort,



From the day of his daughter's death, a new phase commences in the life of M. Dupont, a life of increased fervour and more exalted perfection. He had hitherto had a tie closely connecting him with the world, now he seemed to have no further relations with it save those of zeal and charity. The prediction of the Sister Saint-Pierre was soon to be realised: his sublime act of detachment was to elevate the servant of God to heights of divine love which are to be met with only among saints.



## CHAPTER IX.

### VARIOUS WORKS OF CHARITY.

AMONG the many institutions which were largely indebted to M. Dupont's charity, the first place ought to be given to that of the Little Sisters of the Poor, not only on account of the never-ceasing liberality which he exercised towards them, but because he was the active means of establishing them at Tours. It was at Saint-Servan that he became acquainted with their humble beginnings and with their founder, the Abbé Le Pailleur. There were then but three or, at most, four Sisters, the nucleus of an institution now spread throughout the world. Its object is well known, that of giving a home to the aged poor, both men and women, irrespective of merits or of creed, supplying them with food and clothing, and providing for all their needs with the tenderest care.

With his ardent love of Christ's poor M. Dupont at once saw the truly evangelical character of such an institution, and its eminent opportuneness. He watched and aided its progress with intense interest, opening his purse freely, as was his wont, and adding his still more valuable prayers and his ready counsels where needed and sought. After the establishment of the house at Saint-Servan there followed those of Rennes and Dinant. Tours was to be the fourth, thanks to the "holy man."

It was in the year 1845 that he first began seriously to contemplate the realisation of this project, which had to encounter many difficulties. He had recourse to his usual weapon of prayer, and waited. He had, moreover, a zealous auxiliary in a pious lady, Mlle. de la Valette, who, indeed, had been the first to draw his attention to the nascent community at Saint-Servan. That very year, after his return home, had occurred in Tours the disastrous inundation, which, in the misery and destitution which were its consequences, made the need of the devoted aid of such an institution as that of the Little Sisters of the Poor more than ever press upon his mind. He made a formal request of the Superioress on November the 19th, 1846, who replied that, after the example of the great St. Martin, who gave the half of his cloak in alms, she might spare him a few Sisters. This was a great sacrifice in the infancy of a community, but God rewarded her, replacing them speedily by fresh applicants. It was still, however, necessary to obtain the authorisation of the ecclesiastical and civil powers, as well as permission for the Sisters to make their quest from door to door. The Mayor, who was personally acquainted with both the promoters of

the project, readily acceded ; but the obtaining the Archbishop's consent might be a matter of some difficulty, and, in fact, in the first instance he was very reserved, for the institution, it must be remembered, was novel then, and the times were very difficult. He knew the favourer of the design, M. Dupont, and the high esteem which he entertained for his virtue would have prevented him from joining with those who taxed the holy Pilgrim with exaggeration ; he might, perhaps, have smiled, but he certainly would not have acquiesced in the reproach ; one, it may be remarked, of which its object was fully aware, and excused himself, after his manner, without any contrition. "M. de Bonald," he would say, "tells us somewhere that there are three degrees of comparison—the positive, the comparative, and the superlative—in all languages ; but that in French there is wanted a fourth, the excessive." "Now, as for me," he laughingly added, "I am a Frenchman, you know." The Prelate, however, without believing that the zeal of M. Dupont was "excessive" on this, or on any other, occasion, probably felt that the responsibility of his own position made it incumbent on him to consider the matter, not merely with the eye of faith, but with a certain practical prudence and caution. Nevertheless, he was unwilling to discourage so good a work. He therefore did not reject the proposition, nay, he applauded the object, and in a way signified his acceptance by giving a conditional sanction to the undertaking whenever favourable circumstances offered. Mgr. de Morlot, assuredly, had no expectation that immediate advantage would be taken of this qualified permission, or that circumstances would be supposed to be sufficiently favourable

for immediate action, yet so it was. All that was requisite seemed to be now secured; accordingly, while the merits of different houses were under discussion, M. Dupont, after obtaining the consent of the Abbé Le Pailleur, the founder, wrote to the Superioress begging her to send the three Sisters at once to No. 10 Rue St. Etienne, where they would be heartily welcome, and would be on the spot to select their own house; God would do the rest. They came at once. Monseigneur, on hearing of the Sisters' arrival, gave strong expression to his annoyance that his words should have been interpreted as a permission to risk without delay the success of an undertaking of this nature. Mlle. de la Valette, who had been instrumental in obtaining the Archbishop's sanction—M. Dupont, as usual, having kept in the background—was greatly grieved and disconcerted, for she was as timid as she was zealous. She was profuse in her apologies and, while protesting the good intentions of all concerned, declared that, since the Archbishop's sentiments had been misunderstood, no one, the Sisters included, would wish to attempt anything without his approval; they should, therefore, be at once sent back to Brittany free of expense. The Prelate, however, was most reluctant to take upon himself the responsibility of crushing the good work; accordingly, as the Sisters were already at Tours, he was willing they should remain and have full liberty of action. It is almost superfluous to add that this excellent and pious bishop was amongst the foremost to acknowledge and rejoice at the benefit which the presence of the Little Sisters of the Poor speedily conferred on his episcopal city. After enjoying the hospitality of the Rue St. Etienne for some days,

the Little Sisters, on the feast of the Epiphany, entered their new abode, which the kindness of their host had taken care to provide with all that was needful. On the 22d of January we find seven poor women, all most interesting objects on account of their misery, installed in this asylum; for it is misery, whether bodily or spiritual, which wins the heart of the Little Sister and ensures her love.

Space would fail to relate all that M. Dupont did for these good religious, and continued all his life to do, or the affection which he bore them. Very soon after their establishment, one of the Vicars of the Cathedral met him in the Place de l'Archevêché. His countenance wore a look of abstraction, as if he were immersed in deep thought; but, perceiving the Vicar, he stopped him suddenly, and, without any sort of preface, throwing up his arms with a gesture of exultation, he exclaimed, "Would you believe it? Is it possible? The rich men and great lords offer high wages, and are prodigal of gold and silver, to procure good servants; and after all they are ill served. And now here are the filthy, the ragged, the bare-footed served—as God Himself is served! And by whom, then? Guess—by the Sisters, by the friends of God, the Little Sisters of the Poor," and a thrill of joy seemed to pervade his whole frame. It has been noticed already how he was wont to devote to their use all the produce of his garden; frequently also, when meeting the truck of a green-grocer or fruiterer, he would stop it, purchase all its contents, and send them to the house of the Little Sisters, rejoicing in the thought of the treat he had provided for its inmates. He constantly visited them, and supplied their smallest

necessities, often going with his pockets full of cakes and sweetmeats for the old people. The loving tenderness with which he spoke to these poor creatures was difficult to describe, nor would it be possible to imitate it save where there was a heart overflowing with charity like his. We may copy acts of kindness, but we cannot copy love ; we must have it in order to show it as he did.

In consequence of the results of the inundation, the year 1847 was one of general distress. The Little Sisters persevered in receiving all the old people whom Providence sent them, but a larger house became an imperative necessity. In the work of removal, M. Dupont, not content with supplying for the expense incurred, worked with his own hands like any common day-labourer ; and when, in 1848, the Sisters desired to purchase the building they now occupy, it was by means of the dowry which had been destined for Henriette, that her father enabled them to do so. In 1853 a malignant fever broke out in the town, and seventy-five of the inmates were attacked by it. M. Dupont used to go several times a day to console the sick, and would often render them very trying services. He exhibited the same charity in 1854, when the cholera raged at Tours, and the Little Sisters lost nineteen of their old people, one religious, and one postulant. His visits were as assiduous as in the preceding year, and, as ten of the Sisters were suffering from the epidemic and there were only three who were competent to do the work of the house, he undertook their quest for them, adding his own alms to the money he collected from door to door. To the last M. Dupont continued to interest himself warmly for

the Little Sisters, and his name continues to be held in benediction amongst them.

Allusion has been made to M. Dupont's intimacy with the Abbé Le Pailleur, the founder of this institution. That excellent priest had the most unbounded confidence in his friend, and made him acquainted with all the secret designs which he cherished, and which awaited only a fitting opportunity for carrying them out. One of these was the establishment of a society of missionaries destined for the evangelisation of country districts. An unexpected event enabled M. Dupont to further this project. A friend of his, a landed proprietor at Bouligny in the diocese of Meaux, died at Paris, leaving him all his fortune. This friend was M. Bordier, whose acquaintance the reader will recollect young Léon Dupont made when he found the good man instructing the little Savoyards. The most cordial relations had continued to subsist between the two, and M. Bordier had several times told his friend that he meant to make him his sole legatee. As often as he said this, so often also did M. Dupont beseech him to do no such thing, assuring him that he had already more than enough to do in managing and well employing what he possessed. Nevertheless M. Bordier persevered in his purpose, and, to M. Dupont's astonishment, a letter arrived one day from that gentleman's lawyer announcing his death, and informing him that he had left him all his property. The property, in fact, yielded an income of 12,000 francs (£480). His embarrassment was great; for he knew that M. Bordier's intention in bequeathing him this fortune, an intention he had frequently expressed, was that, although he might at his pleasure employ it in good works, he was not at



liberty to divest himself of the property itself. Poor M. Dupont, in short, was as much troubled at this legacy as another might have been by the disappointment of one on which he had reckoned. "What am I to do with it?" he said. "Why in the world did Bordier leave it me? I do not need it." Then he reflected that his friend would probably desire that his own good works should continue to be supported by it. But which? Here, quite tired out, he fell asleep, and the next morning laid the matter before God, as was his wont, at Mass. No sooner had he received Communion than the two names of Bordier and Le Pailleur presented themselves forcibly to his mind in close connection. He doubted not but that this was his answer from our Lord. He no longer hesitated, but wrote to M. Le Pailleur, placing the money at his disposal for the execution of the design of which he had so often spoken to him. After much prayer they agreed upon carrying it out at Boulogny on the property of M. Bordier. It was here that the work destined to supply missionaries for the evangelisation of the country poor was to have its beginnings. M. Dupont caused the old castle to be prepared and adapted for the community, and considered that he sufficiently complied with M. Bordier's condition by consenting that a small room should be reserved for him to occupy whenever he pleased to go. For the rest, with his usual humility, he desired to be not so much as mentioned in connection with the work.

As he took no active part in its progress, we need say nothing further about it, save that later it was converted into an association of diocesan missionaries, known as Priests of Our Lady of Hope. We cannot

leave this subject, however, without relating a little anecdote, highly characteristic of our holy man. M. Le Pailleur, having one day written a hasty note to his friend to acquaint him with the happy success of some step which had been taken in reference to Boulogny, added, "How good is God! let us say it a thousand times." After despatching this letter, M. Le Pailleur found himself obliged to undertake a journey which would cause him to pass through Tours. He arrived unexpectedly at M. Dupont's house about nine or ten o'clock in the evening, having been all day in the *diligence*. He was tired, covered with dust, and had scarcely had time to partake of any refreshment on the road. M. Dupont, who had received his letter only a few minutes previously, all absorbed in the joy and gratitude which had been suggested to him,—and to suggest anything of the sort was to kindle a blaze where the fire never ceased to burn,—was on his knees praying. He no sooner saw M. Le Pailleur than, without so much as asking him a question or giving a thought as to what he might need after his long journey, he took him by the arm and gently drew him to kneel down by his side. "How very opportunely you have come!" he exclaimed; "I was just engaged in saying a thousand times, 'How good is God!—*Quam bonus Israel Deus!*' See," he added, showing the rosary on the beads of which he was reckoning his acts of praise, "I have already said it five hundred times. If you like, we will continue it together. It is the least we can do." His pious friend gladly fell in with the idea, and together they began repeating, "How good is God! how good is God! *Quam bonus Israel Deus!*" until the full number of acts had been completed. Then

only did M. Dupont; descending from the heights to which his faith and devotion had transported him, perceive that he had forgotten the duties of hospitality, and hasten to minister to the wants of his tired and famished friend.

The work of the Little Sisters of the Poor by no means absorbed all M. Dupont's charity. As member of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, he had long been in the habit of visiting the sick and afflicted poor at their houses, and, when other duties interfered with his regular attendance at the weekly meetings, he never gave up these domiciliary visits. He begged the doctors to let him know of the most destitute cases, and these he would make the special object of his attention and assistance, not only pecuniary, but often personal also, and bestowed with his own hands. He has been known in the case of the neglected sick to perform services for them, during several months, of a kind most repugnant to our nature, and to his, be it added, in particular, for by temperament he was nice and delicate, recoiling from what was offensive to the senses. Yet his exceeding charity rendered these visits and ministrations the charm of his life, and it required nothing less than those occupations which, as we shall see, detained him a captive before the Holy Face, and, later, the infirmities of age which kept him perforce at home, to cause him to forego them. Even then he still wished to be reckoned as a member of the Conference, though "only an honorary member," he would say, "laid on the shelf."

There was another work of mercy which had great attractions for him, namely, visiting the prisons. The Penitentiary of Tours offered an ample field for his zeal, and he placed himself at the disposal of the

chaplain, willingly aiding him in the task of bringing back certain among the prisoners to more Christian sentiments. How eminently successful he was, in several cases, at least, is proved by letters still extant, written by some of these poor men after their discharge, and full of the most touching expressions of gratitude. M. Dupont always took care not to lose sight of them on their liberation, a matter of great importance.

The heroism of his charity may be illustrated by one example. A young man, named Adrien Bouchet, had been arrested with sixteen others charged with having broken the street lamps during some riots occasioned by the high price of bread. They were all apprehended on the testimony of an accomplice, but Bouchet protested his innocence, and possibly he spoke the truth; however, he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, which put him in a state of violent exasperation. The chaplain handed him over to M. Dupont to soothe him, instruct and prepare him for his first communion, which he had never made. When M. Dupont entered the cell he was met with an odour of a most sickening character. He had been already apprised by one of the warders of what he would have to encounter, but the young man himself told him the cause, which arose from some disease which had afflicted him from childhood, and had stood in the way of his obtaining any instruction or earning his livelihood. At school his companions could not endure to have him near them, and gave him offensive nicknames; even in church and at the catechism the Curé had been obliged to put him somewhere by himself. In the prison, the accumulated stench in his cell was too much for the warders, who used to push

in his ration of food as hastily as they could and hurry away. After four or five visits, even M. Dupont felt as if he could stand it no longer, and sought out the doctor to ascertain if anything could be done. The latter declared that the complaint was incurable, and only spoke of an appliance of a costly kind which might be tried when he left the prison. No alleviation, therefore, could be even hoped for at the present, but M. Dupont's love of God triumphed over a repugnance which naturally would have been insurmountable to him, and with indescribable patience and compassion he week after week visited this poor repulsive creature, who repaid his kindness all the time with nothing but coarse abuse. At last, he succeeded in touching the man's heart and winning his confidence. Bouchet consented to accept a medal of St. Benedict, and to make a novena in honour of the saint. M. Dupont, after relating to him many facts calculated to encourage him and animate his faith, left him, and did not return for four days. When he entered the cell at the end of that time, he was struck at once by a diminution of the odour. "I am better," were the first words that the prisoner addressed to him. Circumstances prevented M. Dupont from returning to the Penitentiary until the close of the novena. It ended on a Sunday, and, when he visited the prisoner on the Monday, Bouchet met him with a beaming countenance to announce his complete cure. Grateful for the favour he had received, the young man made his first communion with a fervour which delighted the chaplain. He was soon afterwards released, and, in a letter to a friend, M. Dupont reports himself as much satisfied with his subsequent behaviour. He procured him a lodging in a good pious family in the

## M. DUPONT.

parish of La Riche, whence he went daily to the Christian Brothers for instruction ; the Superioress of the Little Sisters providing him with two meals a day, and M. Dupont giving him a third at his own house.

We might add many other recorded examples of his unwearied charity—and how many more must have passed unrecorded, for whenever it was possible he concealed his generous deeds—but we prefer to select an instance of kindness and forbearance which, trifling as it may seem, has quite a saintly air about it. On a certain evening, as he was beginning one of those devout nocturnal rounds of which mention has been made, he met a man driving a cart, who had a horse fastened by a rope to the back of the vehicle. The animal broke loose, and M. Dupont caught it and brought it back to its owner. Presuming, apparently, on this good-natured act, the man begged him just to hold the horse while he went into an adjoining wine-shop to get the rope mended. Although M. Dupont had a shrewd suspicion that the man had something else in view besides the repair of his rope, he readily consented, and had to remain in charge of the beast for more than an hour. Such an abuse of kindness would hardly have failed to elicit some angry words from most persons, and it certainly deserved them, but when the offender at last made his appearance, M. Dupont contented himself with a little harmless banter as to his protracted absence, and then went his way.

The alms which he habitually bestowed were not only frequent but unstinted. Towards himself, however, he might be called more than niggardly, for he gave away his very clothes. Adèle, the mulatto servant, relates that his shirts used to disappear one



after the other. Sometimes, she said, he would come in with a great rent in his trousers, and she would say, "Sir, if that is to be mended, you must go to bed while I am doing it, it is the only pair you now have ;" and he would quietly do as he was bid. His generosity extended to the smallest things, and would display itself, not only in relieving want, but in procuring pleasure for others, particularly recreation for children or the poor. He would furnish the Christmas trees for families of his acquaintance, liberally giving, in addition, his ten or twenty francs to help to defray the expenses of the little annual entertainment in which some poor children were invited to partake. Then, too, he would be present himself, cheering the party with the joyous sunshine of his countenance and a genial word of kindness for every one. If he visited friends in the country where there were children, he was sure to go loaded with sweetmeats ; and we may sum up all by saying that in these minor charities of life, as in the greater, he invariably did things nobly and liberally, and with such unaffected cordiality as to put all at their ease and in good humour with themselves and with others.

Friends and neighbours, however, had by no means a monopoly of his good-will and benevolence. He was particularly amiable to strangers, Protestants not excepted. His welcome to them was not one of mere politeness, but of what may be called incipient friendship, for with him there was no such thing as mere politeness. Amongst these casual visitors at Tours we may mention a family, Irish on the mother's side, which still cherishes his memory, for most of its members are living, with the greatest love and veneration. The father was English and a Protestant, and his



conversion was the constant subject of the prayers of his wife and children. They sought out M. Dupont, whom they knew by reputation. He received them, the daughter tells us, most graciously, and inscribed their father's name on the register of the Nocturnal Adoration, assuring them that they might reckon on his conversion as certain. He also turned over the pages of his open Bible, and read a text to them in confirmation of this promise. His face actually beamed with joy as he spoke to them for the space of an hour of God and of the joy of serving Him. The narrator avers that, from contact with this soul full of the fire of charity, she felt a spark kindled in her heart which would never be extinguished. "Some days after," she says, "M. Dupont returned our visit, and although my good father did not comprehend his language full of faith, which was new to him, nevertheless he suddenly began to frequent the cathedral of Tours without seeming to know exactly why; it appeared quite impossible to him to lose Mass, even when the weather was bad; he read and studied Catholic books, and died in the bosom of the true Church." M. Dupont constantly visited the family during his last illness, manifesting to them, as the daughter says, the sympathy of an old friend, rather than the courtesy of an acquaintance of but a few months' standing. He consoled her mother, who suffered much from her loss, and who conceived some anxiety concerning her husband's late conversion after sixty-four years of Protestantism, and the shortness of his illness. M. Dupont reminded her of the good thief, to whom three hours sufficed to win Paradise, and with many such like words did he comfort her in her grief. He was, moreover, of great profit to her own soul, persuading her to

frequent the sacraments, which she had only hitherto done at the great festivals of the Church. M. Dupont's exquisite thoughtfulness always particularly struck the daughter. "I have seen him," she says, "carrying my mother a great bouquet of shamrock, surrounded with lovely violets, on the 17th of March, the feast of the Patron Saint of Ireland, along with a branch of hawthorn, which had miraculously blossomed on a tree planted by St Patrick on the banks of the Loire ;"\* desiring, as she adds, to prove thereby to this Irish-woman, only two months a widow, that the Apostle of her nation had led her to a hospitable land. She recognised in this trait French politeness enhanced by sanctity.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE NOCTURNAL ADORATION.

WHILE Sister Saint-Pierre was receiving the marvellous communications to which allusion has been made, there was another favoured soul, given to prayer and led by extraordinary ways, who was to co-operate in this same work of reparation, which was in her case also to be associated with devotion to the Holy Face. This was Mlle. Théodolinde Dubouché, at that time still living in the world, but who was afterwards to be

\* This tree is to be found in the village of Saint-Patrice in Touraine. Every year, in the heart of winter, it is covered with flowers. Tradition relates that St. Patrick once crossed the Loire, swollen by rain, on his cloak, using his staff as an oar, after which he planted it in the ground, and the very next day, though it was mid-winter, it had taken root and was full out in blossom. This marvel is perpetuated to the present day.

a religious under the name of Marie Thérèse, and the foundress of the Congregation of the *Adoration Réparatrice*. One night, after repeating the Litanies of the Holy Face, she beheld in a dream the Face of our Lord as it appeared in His Passion. Although deeply impressed, she would not have attached any importance to this appearance, since it was but a dream, except for what followed. The image was reproduced intellectually within her, and at last became, as it were, impressed upon her soul so as to be ever present with her. At this time the Prioress of the Carmelites of the Rue d'Enfer at Paris lent her a manuscript containing the revelations made to the Carmelite of Tours, begging her to read and give her opinion of them. Théodolinde was naturally very cautious where it was question of anything extraordinary, but soon the analogy between these communications and what she had herself experienced in prayer struck her forcibly, especially these words: "The sensible sign of this devotion will be My Face covered with ignominy and crowned with thorns." She felt herself now constrained to tell the Prioress of her own vision of the Holy Face, and of the movement which always pressed her to reproduce it in painting. The Mother Prioress referred her to her confessor, who bade her undertake the copy. She completed it on four Fridays, never touching it save on those days, and always painting it on her knees, when she used to prosecute the work in a species of ecstasy.

Fearing she might attach herself to this material object, she gave it to her confessor, the Abbé Botrel, but previously took it to Tours to show it to the Carmelites in that city, probably at their express desire, communicated to her by the Prioress of the Parisian house, for close relations existed, as we have seen,

between the two communities. M. Dupont desired to see this wonderful picture, and the artist carried it herself to his house; she moreover granted him permission to have it copied. The copy had to be hastily executed, but it was a faithful one in point of resemblance, and he gave it to the Carmelite Convent, where it is carefully preserved. Thus the words of our Lord to Sister Saint-Pierre seemed to begin to meet with their accomplishment: "I will give you My Face, and, when you shall present it to My Father, My mouth shall open to plead your cause."\* The picture which remained in the Abbé Botrel's custody was restored to the possession of Théodolinde in April, 1848. She was then living at the Carmelite convent in the Rue d'Enfer, and had felt herself inwardly moved to expose it to the veneration of the faithful. Hitherto her directors had objected, but, when the troublous days of the Revolution of February had stirred all hearts more strongly with the desire of reparation, Mlle. Dubouché obtained permission, in view of the alarming state of affairs, to have a penitential exercise of forty days in the chapel of the Carmelites, where the Face of our Lord was to be exposed on a little altar at which Mass was to be daily offered. It began on Passion Sunday, and the great success of this quarantine suggested the idea of a regular association having reparation for its object.

\* There is a slight discrepancy between the account of this transaction as given by the Abbé Janvier, and that which we find in the Abbé Hulst's *Life of the Mère Marie Thérèse*. The latter says that it was M. Botrel who took the picture to Tours; the former, quoting from a manuscript of M. Dupont, expressly says that it was the artist herself. The difference may be reconciled by the supposition, a most probable one, that the Abbé Botrel accompanied her. The Abbé was intimately acquainted with M. Dupont, and it was in concert with him that he undertook his book on the *Pilgrimages of Our Lady* already noticed.

The associates were instant in prayer during the four memorable days of June, and, while blood was flowing in the streets of Paris, the Chapel of the Carmel had become a powerful centre of attraction to all whose hearts were urged to seek, by expiation and penance, to avert the anger of God from a guilty nation. Théodolinde Dubouché was the soul of this movement, and, while in none of the churches in the capital was it considered safe to expose the Blessed Sacrament, she had obtained leave from the Superior of the Carmelites to prolong their exposition in the convent chapel until eleven o'clock, and on two occasions throughout the whole of the night. It was during one of these nocturnal watchings that she felt herself urged to found a community of women, specially dedicated to the reparative adoration of the Most Holy. Her relations with the Carmelites of Tours were still maintained, and on July 8th, 1848, she received their circular letter announcing the death of Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre. It found her in bed seriously ill, but the thought instantly occurred to her to make a novena of prayers in union with this revered departed sister, promising to make a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to her tomb, if she was restored to health. Ten days afterwards she came joyously to Tours to fulfil her vow, and, on her return from the cemetery, M. Dupont heard her exclaim with enthusiasm, "I was ill and condemned by the physicians, but see what the venerable confidante of Jesus can do ! I am perfectly well, and the journey has not fatigued me." She had felt herself, when praying at Sister Saint-Pierre's grave, more than ever inspired to persevere in her holy project.

It will be sufficient to add that on the 6th of August

following, Mlle. Dubouché was enabled to commence this work of reparation through the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, ecclesiastical sanction having previously been obtained, and three months later the infant congregation, as yet not very numerous, had members sufficient to keep up the nocturnal adoration twice a week. It was on one of these occasions that the Père Augustin Marie of the Most Holy Sacrament came into the chapel to join the adorers. This was the celebrated Père Hermann, the miraculously converted Jew, whose devotion to the Most Holy is well known, and who had not yet taken the habit of a Discalced Carmelite. Hours passed as minutes, when, the time for closing having arrived, the Tourière gave the signal for leaving the chapel. Still the Father did not stir. When warned for the second time, he said to the Sister, "I will retire as soon as these persons at the end of the chapel move." "But they will remain all night," replied the Portress. That was enough to kindle the zeal of him who has been called the Angel of the Tabernacle. He hurried off to Mgr. de la Bouillerie, then Vicar-General. "I have just," he said, "been turned out of a chapel where women are to remain before the Blessed Sacrament all night." "Well, find me the men," replied Mgr. de la Bouillerie, "and we will authorise you to imitate these pious women whose lot you envy." P. Hermann was not slow to profit by this permission, and the first adoration took place on the 6th of December, 1848, just as the news had arrived of Pius IXth's escape to Gaeta.

M. Dupont adopted the idea with transport. His own love for the Blessed Sacrament, and his intimate relations with P. Hermann and other holy religious,



Apostles of the Eucharist, admirably prepared him to second this good work, which by his efforts was installed at Tours on the 2d of February, 1849. No time had certainly been lost, yet our "holy man" had met with little encouragement. All his friends had regarded his project as a pious venture which could not possibly succeed. Tours was not remarkable for its devotional ardour; it loved its ease and its pleasures. But M. Dupont never doubted for a moment. He had the Archbishop's sanction and warm encouragement; that sufficed him, and the success surpassed even his hopes, which always kept pace with his faith. Two months later, we find him telling a friend that the adorers amounted to seventy-four, and that before another month they might reckon on a hundred. Monseigneur himself expressed his astonishment at the rapidity with which the fire had spread from one soul to another. This success was greatly due to the holy man's own zeal, and, it must be added, to his popularity, for he was generally venerated and loved. The servant of God wished the nocturnal adoration to begin on the three nights preceding Lent, nights which follow those days of riotous dissipation with which that penitential season is so frequently ushered in. Mgr. de Morlot, who gave the new work his special approbation, had approved the rules drawn up by M. Dupont, which, with a few modifications, were identical with those followed at Paris.

His earliest recruits were from the working class, headed by several members of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, and by others belonging to the first families of the place. To keep watch was reckoned quite a *fête*, and you might see workmen coming down from their scaffoldings, and complaining in the



street that they had not yet been summoned. A countryman from the neighbourhood used to walk six miles to come and take his turn at the Adoration, and the same back in the morning. The night was finished by a Mass, at which most of the adorers usually approached the Holy Table; and among them might be found men who had quite reformed their lives that they might be allowed the happiness of making a monthly communion. The order observed was as follows—we quote M. Dupont's own words: "We assemble, fourteen in number, at the feet of our Lord in the chapel of the Lazarist Fathers, who give us besides the use of a room for our little camp-beds; it is there that we converse together before the evening prayer at the feet of Our Lady of Good Thoughts; there also we take our repose upon the beds, before and after our hour of adoration. Cards with numbers on them mark the hours allotted to each, and facilitate their successive calls during the course of the night. How short those nights are! How short, above all, seems the hour which has fallen to our lot! Some devotional books, placed under a lamp near the adorers, are at their disposal. Few take advantage of them. Some simply say their rosaries, but the greater number place themselves as suppliants at the feet of our Lord, speak to Him, and receive good thoughts from Him; these last find the hour exceedingly short. I have seen tired workmen gently fall asleep, and I own that I rejoiced in having the honour to be near these friends of our Lord."

M. Dupont provided for all the arrangements out of his own pocket, and was very anxious that everything should be clean and comfortable, and that quiet should be strictly observed during the hours of repose.

As the devotion began in the middle of winter, he had a brazier put in the room, which was kept burning all night. He sent lamps also. When the Lazarist Fathers desired to construct a new chapel, M. Dupont conceived the idea of a crypt for adoration during the winter nights, and furnished the Fathers with the 10,000 francs needed for the purpose of excavating and fitting it up. The Apostolic zeal of this pious layman was quite irresistible. He would go round to his friends, and to young men of his acquaintance in all classes, inviting them to come, and his burning words, instinct with faith, kindled in them marvellously the spirit of reparation. He would also invite strangers who came to see him, persons unknown to him, and often previously very indifferent regarding religious matters. Then his conversation in the waiting-room before prayers delighted every one. They grouped themselves round him, and he instructed, he enlivened, he interested them in a thousand ways, and meanwhile they appeared to imbibe, as by a holy infection, the fervour and unction which animated all he said. Often one of the Priests of the Mission would come and join the circle, and say that he would be at the disposal after prayers of any who desired to make their confession. M. Dupont would seize on this offer immediately, and with ingenious tact second by some good words the Father's offer. "Let us profit by this gracious invitation, gentlemen," he would say; and then he would be the first to lead the way.

He was always ready to take the place of any one missing, and, if he perceived from an associate's manner that an inconvenient or trying time had fallen to his share, he would say at once, "Leave that hour to me; it suits me; I take it." Sometimes he would

pray for several consecutive hours. You might see him at such times immovable as a statue, but with the face and air of a seraph. He was daily on the look-out to engage casual adorers, were it only some one who was paying him a passing visit. In this way he would procure an agreeable surprise for the associates, by taking to their evening meeting some celebrated religious, or some priest renowned for his eloquence and virtues. They had thus the pleasure of several times hearing P. Eymard, P. Hermann, P. Chaignon, and many others. He seems to have been particularly successful in enrolling military men, some of them officers of high grade, and during the years which followed the Revolution of 1848, when the National Guard used to keep watch, M. Dupont, who had to take his turn, would seize the occasion to make proselytes, and often some of them, when relieved from their post, might be seen coming with him to finish their night at the "Adoration." But he attracted men of all classes and professions, students of law or medicine, lawyers' clerks, men employed on the railway; and these last were not the least fervent. Some who had only one free night in the week would come and spend an hour before the Blessed Sacrament. There was a stoker who attended regularly every week, and who, after the morning Mass which was said at four o'clock was over, went and shut himself up in one of the railway carriages to say his rosary, remaining there until it was his time for resuming work. Other instances of like self-denial in men who had their bread to earn by daily labour might be quoted. Nothing delighted our "holy man" more than seeing the practice of frequent communion growing among the men whom he had drawn to the nocturnal adora-

tion, some of whom previously had never approached the sacraments; for it was one of the artifices of his zeal to address himself frequently to those whom he well knew to be estranged from the practice of their religion. If he could only entice them to the Adoration, he made sure of bringing them at last to confession and communion. Knowing as he did that indifferentism, rather than active enmity to religion, was at the bottom of their habitual abstention from the sacraments, he reckoned upon warming their cold hearts by drawing them within the influence of those beams of divine charity which are ever radiating from the Eucharist, an influence aided by that powerful attraction which acts so wonderfully where there is a mutual association in any soul-stirring emotion. If in the natural order it is difficult to resist this sympathetic attraction, how much more where grace is also working!

Some of the returns of souls to God operated in this way were so peculiar that one must regard them as instances of an exceptional, rather than an ordinary, influence of grace. One day, a father of a family, who had long abandoned all his religious duties, was brought to the Chapel of the Adoration by the desire to obtain the cure of his sick son. M. Dupont used to seize any such favourable opportunity to throw in his bait. "Come," he had said, "you shall pass the night with me; we will pray together in union with all the brethren." The man came, assisted at the prayers, spent his hour before the Blessed Sacrament and the rest of the night in the room allotted to repose. At the morning Mass, seeing all present going up to the altar to receive Communion, he thought that he also was to go, which he accordingly did, to the great surprise of one of the associates, who was aware of the

utter neglect of religion in which the man had so long lived. He waylaid him, therefore, as he was coming out of the chapel, and, questioning him, was astounded when the man avowed that he had not been to confession, asking with much simplicity whether he had done wrong, and, if so, what he ought to do. The pious brother was excessively disturbed, and saw nothing in the transaction but a fearful sacrilege. M. Dupont, however, to whom he hastened to refer the matter, took altogether another view. With his quick spiritual discernment he at once saw that this was an act of sheer ignorance done in good faith, an ignorance peculiar to the period. So far from being shocked, therefore, he rejoiced, and said that Satan was going to be caught in his own trap. "Take him to a confessor," he added, "and you will see that all will go right." And so it was; the man made his confession with much humility and penitence, and lived afterwards as a good Christian.

M. Dupont was most solicitous to attract young men who, by being habituated to frequent confession and communion, might thus be fortified against the temptations of the world; and the most consolatory results often justified his hopes, as we find recorded in his letters. He kept a register of the special graces, spiritual and temporal, recommended to the prayers of the associates. The following answer to prayer may be justly regarded as miraculous. M. Dupont put the sign of the cross against it on the register, a practice he henceforth continued in the case of any favour obtained. M. Redon, the Superior of the Priests of the Mission, wanted four thousand francs to aid a good man who had some business troubles. M. Dupont was no sooner acquainted with the circumstance than he promised that they would all unite in prayer for

his intention that very evening. "We shall write down a recommendation on our register," he said; and "to-morrow I believe you will have your money." M. Redon had to go to Paris the next day; he said the Mass of the associates at four o'clock, and then took the public conveyance to the Orleans railway. It was a cold winter's morning. Wrapped up in his cloak, he, like his fellow-travellers, kept silence; but as the day began to dawn he saw that one of them was eyeing him attentively; it was an old friend, who by and by exclaimed, "It is M. Redon, I believe." At the first stoppage to change horses, the friend, with a mysteriously confidential manner, got M. Redon to alight with him. He then said that he doubly rejoiced at having met him, first for the happiness of seeing him after so many years' separation, and next because he looked for a service at his hands. "When I espied you just now," he said, "I was occupied in debating what I should do with a sum of money which I had promised to employ in good works if I succeeded in a certain affair. God has granted me success, and now I must pay my debt. If you would only take this money, you who are engaged in so many good works would know better than I should how to apply it to advantage." Now, the sum of money was precisely the four thousand francs which M. Redon wanted in order to get his poor client out of his difficulties. Of course he hastened, on his return to Tours, to acquaint his associates with the extraordinary favour which he had received. We can well conceive that the faith and fervour of the adorers were much increased by this and other signal answers to prayer, whether in the form of graces of conversion or the cure of bodily ailments; and so the work spread and prospered.

The rage of Satan was excited at this spectacle, and was specially directed against the servant of God, whom he endeavoured to thwart in every way, and, when that was not possible, to vex and annoy him. But he had to deal with one who was up to his tricks, and who knew how to defeat his malice. One winter night, the brazier in the crypt when lighted would not burn, but began to smoke in the most extraordinary manner. Puffs of wind came, no one could imagine whence, which even whirled about the cinders in the brazier. M. Dupont arrived. "Eh!" he said, with an expressive gesture, "it is the old one," the name by which he habitually called the devil. "He has put his tail into the brazier, and is using it as a broom to play us this nasty trick; come, let us kneel down and say the Pater and Ave, and then—*Vade retro, Satana.*" They did so, and all the smoke disappeared immediately; the brazier began to burn beautifully, and continued to do so the whole night.

The Lazarists were threatened at one time with a very bad neighbour; a house contiguous to their chapel was about to be bought for an evil purpose. They confided their fears to M. Dupont, who fully shared them, especially on account of the Nocturnal Adoration. But, with his usual faith, he walked round the outer wall inclosing the house, and tried to throw over it some medals of St. Benedict; one of his prime weapons, as we have seen, against the arch-enemy. Not satisfied that he had done quite enough, he asked the Superior if he could show him any place in the interior of their convent where he could see one of the sides of the house and discover some available aperture into which he could throw another medal. They took him to the sacristy, where there was a



small window just facing the building. He opened it and, having singled out with his eye the spot at which he meant to aim, he drew himself up to his full height, and flinging his medal, lodged it precisely as he had intended. "Now that is well!" he exclaimed; and then, laughing heartily, he added, "the old fellow will have a precious colic in his stomach to-night, I can tell you. He will have something else to occupy him instead of tormenting you. You may be quite at ease;" and, in fact, no more was heard of the negotiation for the house, which not long afterwards was purchased by a religious community.

Soon Tours did not satisfy the activity of M. Dupont's zeal for the Adoration. His charity was ever tending to dilate itself. It was all-embracing. In his eyes the Adoration was as a glorious standard of battle, for the idea of combat was as vivid in him always as that of reparation, and his military spirit often reminds us of that of the great St. Ignatius. Under this standard men were called to enrol themselves everywhere, and, when he beheld them grouped round the altar in prayer during all the hours of the night, he regarded them as an army set in battle array and wrestling by reparation against the justly kindled anger of God. "Oh, how truly," he exclaims, "does the work of reparation belong exclusively to men! Where are we to seek for the heads of the conspiracy of earth against heaven? Who invented a lying philosophy? Who undertook the infernal mission of propagating it? If women, for more than a century, had not been praying, where would civilisation be? Would not the fire of heaven have destroyed men and beasts, cities and hamlets? It is time, then, that men, saved by a merciful Providence, should unite and

combine in an object of faith. Since the day is taken up with business, let us give the night to the good God, and become the friends and helpers of Jesus by rendering Him worthy homage. Oh, if I were but free to rush about, I would go from door to door to call the men of good will, who only await a word to open their hearts to our Lord." But this is, indeed, what he daily did at Tours. His zeal, however, extended to many other cities. He was writing to thirty different places at this time. He had friends and correspondents whom he excited and inflamed with a portion of his own ardour. They consulted him, exposed their difficulties, and he answered all, descending to the minutest details. To establish the Nocturnal Adoration he spared neither time nor money. Sometimes, heading a deputation from Tours, he would repair to the spot, and by his advice and, above all, by his example in taking part in their night watchings, he would aid in forwarding the work and inspire the associates with a holy emulation.

M. Dupont had thus his hand in its foundation in almost all the places where it was established. But he concealed his own personal action as far as possible, putting forward pious intermediaries. Many of these were officers high in the army or navy. At Bayonne, for instance, it was M. de Rousset-Pomaret, an artillery officer. He reckoned on him also for Toulouse. At Brest he had M. de Cuers, a great intimate of his, and a most pious man, remarkable for his ardent devotion to the Holy Eucharist. He was at that time captain of a frigate, but subsequently entered the priesthood;\*

\* M. de Cuers was also united by the closest ties of spiritual friendship with P. Hermann, that great lover of Jesus in His Adorable Sacrament, and, being himself more and more attracted

at L'Orient it was another navy captain, M. Cléret, a relative of his own. Then he had correspondents at Marseilles, at Aix, at Toulon, and even in Spain. A commercial traveller, whom he knew, was starting from Tours for that country; immediately, he profits by the circumstance to propagate the Nocturnal Adoration on the other side of the Pyrenees. It is impossible to say how dear this work was to him. These nights of adoration were his repose from the occupations of the day. About the year 1858, in the midst of the great fatigues which he underwent from the numerous visits paid to the Holy Face, we find him writing that the calls upon him were like an ever-increasing flood, and that poor nature felt some regrets at the sight of its incapacity. "Happily," he adds, "the Adoration comes, and this is a blessed repose at the feet of the good Master."

Occasionally, however, tired nature would assert its claims, and he would drop off to sleep during his night-watch. Here is his own simple account of it as given to a friend, who guaranteed the accuracy of what he related even to the very expressions used, which imprinted themselves on his memory. "One night, while I was in adoration in the Chapel of the Mission, I allowed myself to give way to sleep, so great is human weakness! On awaking, I perceived that my companion in keeping watch had also fallen asleep. He was a poor artisan, tired out by his day's work, who was to commence another almost as soon as he should leave the chapel. I did not dare to disturb his rest, convinced as I was, moreover, that his slumber prayed better than my waking. I turned

by the same engrossing passion, he ultimately joined P. Eymard in founding a society of priests devoted to Eucharistic works.

towards the Blessed Sacrament, confounded and humiliated. 'My God, my God,' I exclaimed, 'what good watch we keep before Thee!' Ashamed of my weakness, I set myself as a sort of penance not to take any snuff during the remainder of my adoration that night. But five minutes afterwards I catch myself taking an enormous pinch. 'My God, my God,' I exclaimed with fresh confusion, 'what good watch we keep before Thee!'" The simplicity of this great servant of the Eucharist reveals itself in this little confession. Full of humility as regards himself and of charitable forbearance towards others, towards our Lord he permitted himself a filial and respectful familiarity, which those only who truly reverence and love can or do adopt. Nevertheless, he believed that it honoured our Lord more than all the self-torment of scruples and vexatious analysing of faults and foibles. He seems to have had the love which casts out fear.

M. Dupont longed to see, not nocturnal adoration only, but perpetual adoration established throughout the world. "When will the time come," he said, "when we shall see our Lord honoured day and night in all the parishes of the Catholic world? May not this be after the triumph which shall be accorded to the Church when our Lord shall have destroyed the impious league which is now persecuting the truth? I love to believe this." Again, he would say, "What means can we employ to bring back aliens to the Church?" To this he would confidently reply that prayer was the means, especially united prayer. "Well, then," he would add, "assuredly the best manner of praying is to join in one and the same thought at the feet of our Lord, to adore Him, to make Him honour-

able reparation, and manifest to Him our needs. Oh, what a happiness it would be for the present generation, if such a thought could be realised throughout the whole of France !”

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RUINED BASILICA OF ST. MARTIN.

M. DUPONT, ever since he had settled at Tours, had one great object habitually present to his mind, and in his prayers before the Blessed Sacrament it was always the matter of his most earnest supplication. This cherished object, which he was unceasingly recommending to God, was the reconstruction of the Basilica of the great Thaumaturgus of Gaul, St. Martin, which had been destroyed by the Revolution. Born in an island called after this glorious saint, and settling eventually in a city for ever associated with his name and worship, he had taken him for his special patron and model ; but in 1834 he found, as already noticed, the *cultus* of St. Martin well-nigh passed into complete desuetude in Tours. This desuetude was but one symptom of the neglect into which religion had altogether fallen. Yet faith was not dead in France, neither, as we shall find, was the remembrance of the great Saint of Tours entirely extinct in the popular mind. The first dawn of revival of religious feeling might be observed in the year 1849, when the cholera broke out in the place. The hearts of men visibly turned towards God, and throughout the city might be seen images of our Lady occupying anew the old niches over doors

and at the corner of streets where their forefathers loved to exalt the Mother of God, thus publicly placing themselves under her protection. Tours had abounded in these little Madonnas, which the Revolution had removed or shattered to pieces. Now you might see Mary, not only installed anew on these humble thrones, but honoured with special devotion and surrounded with flowers. The *Sub tuum* or the *Memorare* would be said when the image was placed in its niche, the people kneeling in the street and ever afterwards saluting it as they passed along.

At this juncture the whole city was thrown into additional consternation by the sweeping havoc which the cholera made in the Penitentiary. It was soon cleared of all those inmates whom death had not already struck down, and some of these expired on their way to the hospital. M. Dupont's exertions during the prevalence of this veritable plague have been already mentioned; nor let a tribute be omitted to the charity of the good Archbishop, who, like a second St. Charles Borromeo, heroically devoted himself to the spiritual aid of the sick prisoners. He might be seen on his knees in some miserable cell supporting its wretched occupant in his arms, in order to hear his confession and give him absolution, then passing rapidly on to another to perform the like office, for death gave short reprieve, not a few being carried off in the brief space of half an hour. Many of the warders succumbed, and of the three Sisters who nursed the sick, two died. The people did homage to their charity, and almost the whole population followed them to the grave. Hearts were softened and turned to God; St. Martin was now remembered, and a general desire arose for a public

procession with his relics through the city. The Archbishop acceded to the popular wish. The relics of the saint and those of St. Gatien, the first bishop of Tours, were borne through the streets amidst an immense concourse of people, yet the complaint, so far from spreading in consequence, diminished, and from that day the deaths ceased almost entirely, while twenty sick persons, whose life had been previously despaired of, recovered.

This recourse of the people of Tours to their ancient patron in 1849 had no immediate results in reviving devotion to St. Martin in any striking degree; still, no doubt, it had a certain effect. Several sanctuaries in Touraine dedicated to the saint's honour, but desecrated during the Revolution, had now been restored to their original destination: Candes, a frequent place of pilgrimage of M. Dupont, St. Martin le Beau, and, in the town itself, St. Martin de la Basoche. But, besides his glorious tomb, the very site of which had been effaced from the memory of that generation, there was Marmoutier, the place of retreat of the holy bishop, with its famous grottoes, the great monastery to which he attracted so many disciples, now given over to profane uses. The Archbishop of Tours had the happiness of rescuing and restoring it to the devotion of the faithful and to the memory of its founder. The nuns of the Sacred Heart imposed heavy sacrifices on themselves to become the proprietors of this holy place, in which they were aided by a generous donation of M. Dupont. Three years later, one of the sanctuaries most celebrated by its connection with the saint, Ligugé, was also restored to its former patron, and in 1853 the Benedictines were established in this first and most ancient of the monasteries of Gaul. On



that occasion, the Bishop of Poitiers, recalling the thought of Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks, who asked where would be the hope of victory if Martin was insulted, concluded that glory, prosperity, and victory for the French were bound up with the *cultus* of this great saint. "It is time," added the prelate, with almost a prophetic accent,— "it is time that reparation should be made. Tours will one day make it, and that with splendour and in grand proportions."

At that moment there seemed little to encourage such an expectation, but, a year after the installation of the Benedictines at Ligugé, a modest work of charity was set on foot, which was to become the germ of the great undertaking for which M. Dupont had now been praying for twenty years. He was himself the life and soul of this work, of which he may also be considered as the originator in its new form. He had remarked that the old clothes, so scantily distributed every year among the poor, were rejected by them, and sold as rags, on account of their wretched condition. He accordingly conceived the idea of placing this work under the patronage of St. Martin in memory of his charity to a poor man while yet a soldier and catechumen, and of having the old clothes which were supplied repaired as well as possible, and new ones bought with the money subscribed. The associates at once chose M. Dupont for their president. The sittings were from that time held at his house, in the very same room in which so many wonders were to be enacted, and which is now transformed into a chapel. A few difficulties and some opposition had to be encountered at the outset. As usual, the servant of God took very little part in these discussions. He prayed: without

the help of their Blessed Patron nothing effectual, he thought, could be done. In about eighteen months' time the intervention of the saint began to show itself. All difficulties were smoothed away, and Mgr. Morlot approved, with a few slight amendments, the regulation for the Vestuary, as it was called, under the title of "The Work of St. Martin for supplying Clothes to the Poor." The rules had been drawn up by M. Dupont in concert with his friends.

The work was popular from the very first; in the course of four months three hundred garments were given away, and, what rejoiced the president's heart still more, the honour of St. Martin was growing in proportion. The members of the Commission earnestly desired to have a solemn novena preparatory to his feast. Their wish was realised in 1856, and the novena was preached by a celebrated Capuchin Father. On the feast day, November the 11th, the Archbishop, now Cardinal Morlot, offered Mass for the Vestuary, and, at the meeting which followed, its director, the Abbé Verdier, in the name of the Commission, expressed the united aspiration of its members to behold one day the dispersed stones of the Basilica collected and the *cultus* of the great Thaumaturgus of Gaul restored. This was the first word publicly uttered on the subject of the reconstruction of the Basilica, and it was warmly received by the Cardinal. M. Dupont's secret wish and prayer had at last found an echo. The subject had, however, been already working in the Cardinal's mind. He had recently rescued from profanation the desecrated Church of St. Julien, and, as it was very near the site of St. Martin's ruined Basilica, some persons thought it would be desirable to give it to St. Martin. This would be a speedy and convenient way of bestow-

ing on the patron of Tours a splendid church. But the prelate preferred leaving to St. Julien what belonged to him, still cherishing the hope, without clearly seeing his way as yet, of doing something for St. Martin. Affairs took him this year to Rome. The opportunity was good for obtaining the Holy Father's benediction on the project. The members of the Commission accordingly addressed a petition to the Archbishop to this effect, and, at M. Dupont's particular desire, their letter was dated on the feast of St. Gatien, the first Bishop of Tours. The blessing willingly granted by Pius IX., at Cardinal Morlot's request, greatly raised the hopes of all. Before the Cardinal's return to his diocese, he was, however, transferred to the see of Paris, rendered vacant by the assassination of Mgr. Sibour. Mgr. Guibert, appointed to fill his place, was equally zealous for the honour of St. Martin, but he was induced, by the reasons which seemed to militate in its favour, to resume the plan which his predecessor had not relished, of giving to the great Saint of Tours the beautiful Church of St. Julien, the restoration of which was nearly completed. The advocates of this plan urged that the idea of rebuilding the ancient Basilica of St. Martin was chimerical. The public road had been carried over its site, houses had been erected, and the precise spot where the tomb itself had existed was matter of complete uncertainty.

It is needless to say that to M. Dupont the substitution of St. Julien's Church for the ancient Basilica would have been highly unsatisfactory, and his friends of the Commission shared his feelings. It may occur to some to wonder how it could have been possible that little more than fifty years after its demolition, so much ignorance should have prevailed as to the precise ground

occupied by the ruined edifice ; but it will be remembered that its destruction was not effected by popular violence, but in a far more systematic way. The municipality, it is true, rifled the sacred building in 1793, carried away all that was precious in it, abandoning the relics to whosoever pleased to take them or throw them away ; which however, a bell-ringer and a pious woman were able to collect and secrete. The dome which had covered the tomb was destroyed at that time, and the ancient church, the revered centre of pilgrimages, which took rank as the fourth in Christendom, was given up to profane uses. Troops bivouacked and horses were stabled under its vaulted roofs, but the authorities of the district declared that these animals commonly died, and strange stories were current of lights appearing and terrifying the horses, so that they became unmanageable. Be this as it may, men and beasts turned out, and the ruined church remained gaunt and desolate, exposed to the weather and pilaged daily of whatever remained in it worth laying a hand upon, such as pieces of iron, lead, and even stones when movable, but the building itself was too solid to be damaged any further in this way ; and its huge mass, the skeleton of its former greatness, still rose grandly over the town.

In February, 1795, the right of occupying such of these ancient edifices as had not been alienated was conceded to the Catholics. The Constitution of the year 111, as it was called, also declared that no one could be molested in the exercise of his religion. Nevertheless, this law remained almost a dead letter in the provinces, where priests continued to be imprisoned and guillotined. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the fall of Robespierre, although it brought

sensible alleviation to the position of Catholics in Paris, put a stop to persecution throughout the country, for there, on the contrary, it still continued to prevail, and the accession of the Directory to power on the 4th Brumaire (October 26th), 1795, only increased its activity. Then it was that orders were given to the departmental administrations to demolish the churches. More mischief, and that radical and irretrievable, was done then than at any other period of the Revolution. Arras, Cambrai, Maçon, Avranches saw their cathedrals sold and demolished. The monasteries were dealt with similarly, Cluny amongst them; the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours was to share the fate of so many illustrious sanctuaries. The work of demolition was begun in September, 1797. The Directory urged it on energetically; its diabolical fury against religion displaying itself equally in the deportation of priests and in the extermination of every memorial of Christianity. But St. Martin's massive church was to offer an unexpected resistance. The stones adhered together inseparably, and a year later gunpowder was employed to expedite the work of destruction. The explosion damaged some neighbouring houses and crushed one of the superintendents. The Directory had been suppressed, and the First Consul had signed the Concordat, before the demolition of a great part of the edifice had been completed. The local authorities, desirous to finish their undertaking, now proceeded to sell the ground which it occupied, the project being to run a street from west to east through the whole length of the Basilica. This plan would have still left the pillars and side portions of the church for the present standing. The administration affected to fear that these would become

## M. DUPONT.

harbour for rats, and, in its insane haste to level the whole building at once, ordered the road to be widened and a north-easterly inclination to be given to it, that it might run athwart the pillars of the nave, which were still erect. But this device may be regarded as providential, for it was the saving of St. Martin's tomb and of the larger portion of the choir, which lay buried among the ruins, and to which M. de Pommereuil, the Prefect, who was so solicitous about rats, never gave a thought. This deviation, however, from the exact line of the church, passed out of the memory of the inhabitants, who believed that the Rue de Pommereuil, afterwards called the Rue St. Martin, ran, as originally intended, precisely along the ground upon which the church had stood.

M. Dupont had never forgotten the positive assertion of the old woman, that St. Martin's tomb was not under the public road, and both he and the members of the Commission felt the all-importance of ascertaining its true situation without delay. Prayer and the most minute investigation went hand in hand; and in these researches, conducted at night, one of the members of the Commission, a railway engineer, was diligently engaged. If only an ancient plan of the ground could be discovered, the point would be settled. The overseer of roads for the department confidently affirmed that such a plan did exist, and that he himself had often seen it; the archives of the prefecture were accordingly examined, and at last the document in question was found. It was drawn up in the year IX. of the Republic, and in it was traced the whole of the area which the Basilica had occupied, together with the blocks of buildings and the streets then projected. On comparing this plan

with the actual state of the locality, it was clear that the tomb was not under the public road, but under a group of private dwellings. To recover the ground it would be necessary to purchase three of these houses. This was no slight affair in a thickly populated neighbourhood. The members of the Commission were not wealthy men, and M. Dupont's charities had made such inroads on his means, that the requisite sum was far above what his whole remaining fortune could have supplied. To have appealed publicly for help would have been to defeat their own end, and would, at the very least, have encouraged the proprietors to raise their terms.

In this dilemma, application was made to one who was known to be a good and zealous Catholic, the Comte Pèdre Moisant, who at once placed at their disposal the sum of a hundred and fifty thousand francs. In consideration of this magnificent offer, to which must be added a sum of twenty thousand francs raised by private subscription, the Archbishop was induced to abandon his design with regard to St. Julien. There had been little time to lose, for the letter announcing his intention to the clergy was already drawn up, and only awaiting the festival of St. Martin, the 11th of November, for its publication. The month was already begun, and the Archbishop even now required as a condition the speedy purchase of the houses in question. The bargain was effected by the 7th of December. The houses were thereby secured, but it was impossible to enter on immediate possession. There were many occupants who could not be ejected, but must in justice be allowed to remain until the terms for which their apartments had been engaged had expired. No sooner, however,



had the contract been signed, than M. Dupont, accompanied by the Comte Moisant and another member of the Commission, descended into the cellar of one of the newly acquired houses. His object was to pray and return thanks. They had brought candles, and M. Moisant had purchased a small iron chandelier with three branches. Now, this chandelier, hastily bought without examination, represented at its base a demon trampled underfoot. The pious friends remarked this circumstance with pleasure, and still greater would have been their joy had they known where they now stood, namely, in the ancient Chapel of Our Lady at the end of the apse of the Basilica. There they lighted the first three candles which for sixty years had burned in that hallowed spot, and were at that moment separated only by a few paces from the object of their search, the tomb of the glorious St. Martin.



## CHAPTER XII.

### DISCOVERY OF ST. MARTIN'S TOMB.

A FIRST and most important step had now been taken, but difficulties and trials had still to be encountered. The acquisition of the houses, as observed, did not give immediate use of them. In the meantime, the Archbishop wished to proceed cautiously, and would not even allow of any appeal to the liberality of the public for pecuniary aid, till he fully knew what was possible or feasible. Other differences in points of detail between ecclesiastical authority and the Commission threatened to hamper and compromise the work. M. Dupont inwardly suffered from all these

uncertainties and delays, but his associates have testified that never was he more admirable for his calmness, his faith, and his humility. He knew well where to lay the blame ; the old enemy was at work, and he knew also with what weapon to meet and vanquish him. We need scarcely say what that weapon was : prayer, the prayer of undoubting faith. He now proposed to his associates several quiet and unostentatious pilgrimages. They went first to Marmoutier, then to Candes, where the great St. Martin departed this life. But still affairs seemed to make no progress.

It was even reported that the Archbishop regretted having relinquished St. Julien. The venerable Prelate had, it is said, on his first arrival at Tours, and before the relics of St. Martin, made a solemn vow to repair, in such measure as was possible, the ruins of so great a disaster, and he had been impatient to accomplish his promise. What had seemed alone possible to him, and to many, had been the appropriation of the restored church of St. Julien as a substitute for what now seemed beyond recovery. He felt that, under existing circumstances, it would be a serious act of imprudence, and a sort of folly in the eyes of his diocesans and of the world, blindly to engage himself to construct a new Basilica in like proportions to the ancient one. When, therefore, one day, in presence of M. Dupont, president of the Commission, some of the most zealous members pressed him to give his explicit approbation to a project of modified reconstruction, he took up the Gospel, and, opening it at the 14th Chapter of St. Luke, he read aloud the following verses: *Quis ex vobis volens turrim ædificare, non prius sedens computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt,*

*si habeat ad perficiendum, ne, posteaquam posuerit fundamentum, et non potuerit perficere, omnes qui vident incipiant illudere ei, dicentes: Quia hic homo cæpit ædificare, et non potuit consummare? \** “That is my rule,” he said, as he closed the book. M. Dupont, of course, was pained, but was not the least disheartened. Still, so long as it was not sanctioned, adopted, or, at least, permitted by ecclesiastical authority, the undertaking had no existence. They must wait, for it was impossible to urge the Archbishop to act before what seemed to him the proper time. But they could not be too urgent with God. He invites us to be importunate, and it was an invitation to which our “holy man” amply responded, and encouraged all whom he could influence to respond likewise.

The feast of St. Martin in that year, 1858, was a day of much consolation to him. Mgr. Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, preached a panegyric of the saint in the cathedral. How did his heart bound with joy when the Prelate, after saying that he should begin to hope for better days for France when it should have commenced rebuilding the Basilica of St. Martin, turned and thus addressed the Archbishop: “It is for you alone, Monseigneur, to judge of the time which Providence has decreed for this work of regeneration. But the day when you shall raise your voice, France and the entire world, I am confident, will hear you. Popes will hear you, bishops will hear you, priests will hear you, virgins will hear you, all religious Orders will

\* “Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it? Lest after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”—ST. LUKE xiv. 28-30.

hear you, futurity will hear you." The emotion produced by this apostrophe in the multitude which filled the cathedral was intense ; Mgr. Guibert himself was greatly moved.

As no subsequent action, however, was taken on his part, the Commission, always proceeding by the advice of its President, resolved to make a pilgrimage to Ligugé. Thither they all repaired on the 14th of December, the feast of the Reversion, or Return, of St. Martin.\* Kneeling in the cell where the saint had raised a dead man to life, they besought him to resuscitate his Basilica. On their way back, they went to Poitiers to thank Mgr. Pie for the consoling and inspiring words which he had spoken in the cathedral of Tours. The illustrious Prelate blessed them, and gave them anew the warmest encouragement. Meanwhile, M. Baudier, Superior of the great Seminary, had drawn up a memorial from the notes furnished by the Commission, which was presented by him to the Archbishop in their name. It contained a dissertation as to the situation of St. Martin's tomb, tending to prove that it was not under the street, but beneath the recently purchased houses. It was very essential to convince him of that point, for there were not wanting around him persons who questioned the truth of this supposition altogether. The memorial concluded with a petition that the Vestibule of St. Martin might be transferred to one of these houses, and the two others pulled down, in order that a little oratory might be built over the site of the ancient tomb. Mgr. Guibert received this document very favourably, and at the same time authorised a

\* This feast commemorates the restoration of the saint's relics to his tomb. They had been withdrawn through dread of the Norman pirates, and were not brought back for thirty years.

public pilgrimage to Candes, which the Commission, at the instigation of M. Dupont, wished to organise. Many fervent Christians, and numbers of the clergy, took part in this pilgrimage, which may be regarded as the precursor of so many which France was to witness later, sources of so much consolation and so many blessings to the faithful ; pilgrimages to Lourdes, to Paray-le-Monial and other sanctuaries.

Our holy man could scarce contain himself for joy ; this marvellous revival of devotion did not surprise him ; nothing of that kind ever surprised him ; but he was full of gratitude and happiness unutterable. How often during past years had he taken his solitary way to Candes, and alone offered up his devotions at the desolate shrine ! What a change ! Now he went, in company with more than four hundred pilgrims, led by the Grand-Vicar of the diocese, all filled with the same fervent desire, to do homage to the great wonder-worker of Tours and to seek the increase of his honour in the restoration of his glorious sepulchre and ancient church. It is only just to attribute the initiative of this pilgrimage, which was repeated in increasing proportions every year, to the humble pilgrim of the Rue St. Etienne. Blessings followed on this public act of devotion. The Archbishop accorded the requested permission to remove the Vestuary to the vicinity of the supposed site of St. Martin's tomb, and authorised quests to be made for the building of the sanctuary, which it was proposed to erect there. To crown all, by a circular letter addressed to his clergy, and dated the 8th of December, 1859, Mgr. Guibert announced his definitive resolution to restore the tomb of St. Martin on the spot where it heretofore existed. Accordingly, he sought the concurrence of

his clergy towards the accomplishment of the design of some pious individuals, who had, he said, bought on their own responsibility three houses occupying the site of the ancient tomb, with the view of restoring it, replacing the saint's precious relics, and raising over it a chapel to receive and shelter the pilgrims. The Archbishop added that he could not but approve the "noble and generous project of these pious Christians," and that he had promised to recommend their undertaking to charitable souls.

The letter, no doubt, was couched in terms of discretion and reserve, since it did not give permission for anything beyond private collection, leaving it to the Vestuary to gain possession of the sacred spot for the Church of Tours, but it gave a public approbation to the enterprise, an approbation which both sanctified it and inspired its promoters with courage and confidence. This was all that was needed at this stage of the business. M. Dupont regarded it as a pledge of the success of all his cherished aspirations. He was ever full of hope, extracting it from every passing circumstance, as the bee its honey from every flower by the way, and so he drew hope also from a little event which came as a happy coincidence on the very day when he and the members of the Commission, six in number, took possession of one of the houses for the temporary instalment of the work of the Vestuary. A neighbour brought them a basso-relievo representing six pilgrims favourably received by our Lord. It had, of course, belonged to the old Basilica; it was six feet in length, was composed of two very hard stones, and had for years lain on its face in the cellar of a grocer's shop. The delight of M. Dupont and of his friends may be supposed when, upon cleaning the figures and in-

scription, these words emerged: *Peregrini sumus coram te et advenæ*; the rest of the inscription was lost. Dom Guéranger, the Abbot of Solesmes, who accidentally came to Tours the following day, shared the enthusiastic and child-like joy of M. Dupont. Were not these the very words of King David when, as his last will and testament, he was offering to God the materials for the construction of the Temple collected by him and his people? The agreement was too striking not to be accepted as a heavenly token vouchsafed at that moment for their encouragement. The great Benedictine clapped his hands together, and exclaimed, "Why delay any longer? What are you waiting for?" The basso-relievo which came to present itself, so to say, as the first stone of the new edifice was apparently executed in the 14th century. It is still piously preserved in the provisional chapel of St. Martin.

In consequence of explorations made under one of the purchased houses some foundations were discovered which enabled them to determine the exact axis of the Basilica. This was a sure index of that of the tomb also. A curious thing happened on this occasion; most persons would have been satisfied to consider the phenomenon as inexplicable, the natural cause not being apparent, but to M. Dupont it was readily explicable. M. Mandin, an engineer belonging to the railway company, had been sent down into these cellars to execute a drawing of the masonry discovered there. He came up again in a state of considerable excitement, for, while engaged in his work, he had heard all around him songs of heavenly melody. Thinking he might be the victim of some illusion, he went to inquire of the occupant above whether he had



heard some extraordinary singing. Upon receiving a reply in the negative, he looked out into the street, but there was nothing to be seen or heard. No sooner, however, had he returned to the cellar than the same melodious strains again struck his ear. He was now convinced that the cause was supernatural, and afterwards signed a written declaration of the fact, which was countersigned by the members of the Commission, who had heard the account from his own lips immediately after the occurrence. M. Dupont thought it the simplest thing in the world, and extremely encouraging.

It was evident, from the explorations made, that the cellars of these houses extended under the former choir of the church, under the High Altar and a portion of the chapel called the "Repose of St. Martin," containing his mausoleum. Moreover, it appeared that they must be close to its site, which in all probability would be found in the adjoining cellar of the still occupied house, separated by a high wall of modern construction from that which had been examined. A red cross was traced upon this wall in the supposed direction. A few months after the discovery of the basso-relievo, the consent of the Archbishop being obtained, it was determined to convert the ground-floor over this cellar into a provisional oratory. The façade of the buildings was at present to remain untouched, but the floors and partitions were removed inside the portion which was thus prepared. Notwithstanding the sadness of the time—we are now in November, 1860—a few weeks after the battle of Castel Fidardo and the invasion of the Pontifical States, M. Dupont felt his heart thrill with hope. "Next Monday," he writes, "after seventy years of profanation, Mass will be celebrated on the very spot

where stood the High Altar of the Basilica of St. Martin. Seventy years ! May this possibly be the signal of the work of reparation ? In the midst of the deplorable circumstances in which we find ourselves, it would need a prophet to answer that question. We can at least, in the simplicity of faith, raise our voices in sorrowful supplication to heaven, and beseech the Lord, as Zacharias did, to put an end to the captivity of the Church : " Lord, this is now the seventieth year ! " \* The chapel was to be inaugurated on the 12th of November. On the previous day, being the festival of the saint, the six " pilgrims," viz. the members of the Commission, their president at their head, descended into the cellar, now cleared and cleaned, and knelt in prayer before the cross marked on the wall. They also suspended a lamp from the vaulted ceiling and lighted it. Henceforth it was to be kept burning in this subterranean sanctuary. The benediction of the Oratory, which took place on the morrow, was performed with some holy water from the ancient Basilica, which had been carefully preserved by a canon of the cathedral, and those who came after him. The Archbishop, surrounded by his grand-vicars, the members of his chapter, and the clergy of the city, celebrated Mass on the provisional altar, thus renewing close to St. Martin's tomb the August Sacrifice which for seventy years had been interrupted, after being offered there for fourteen centuries.

This first public step in the work of reparation moved the whole city, and even the whole diocese. During the seven following days, continual Masses were being said in the chapel, where a relic of St.

\* Zach. i. 12.

Martin was exposed for veneration, and crowds of persons of all classes pressed in to attend them. They also went down into the cellar below, which was popularly called the subterranean chapel, and was naturally a place of intense interest. Many fervent prayers were offered there, and many of the worshippers devoutly kissed the red cross on the wall indicating the presumed direction of the tomb. Incense, flowers, candles, of which no less than a hundred and eighty were kept burning there during the octave, were brought by the faithful, and during that space of time it was computed that twenty thousand persons must have visited this improvised crypt.

Fifteen days after the benediction of the little chapel, a learned archæologist of Tours, who was a great friend of M. Dupont, M. Lambron de Lignim, discovered in the archives of the préfecture a document of a very important character as regarded the identification of the tomb. It was a *procès verbal*, dated 1686, which had been drawn up by the Canons of St. Martin, and contained the description of a vault explored at that epoch under the tomb, as it had been restored after its profanation by the Protestants in 1562. Old people in Tours knew that the tomb of the saint, situated behind the High Altar at the end of the choir, was raised one step from the level of the floor. It was surrounded by a railing, and surmounted by a brass cupola, which had formerly been of silver. It appeared by the document which M. Lambron found that the Canons repaired the pavement of the choir. They took up the step just mentioned, which surrounded the monument, and perceived a little vault beneath. Into this cavity they descended with the

Vicar of the Chapter. The *procès verbal* gave the length, breadth, and height of the vault and stated the nature of the stone of which it was constructed, which was extremely white.\* It enumerated the objects found in the vault: viz., a chest of wood locked, and resting on two stones; and, leaning against it, two pieces of white marble. The chest contained some dust mixed with bones, and also fragments of white marble. This dust and these bones were all that remained of St. Martin's body, which the Protestants had burned. These ashes, says M. Maan, a historian of the 17th century, had been carefully collected and enclosed in a chest placed in the vault where the saint's relics had previously reposed. The same historian states that fragments of the white marble which St. Euphronius of Autun sent to St. Perpetuus to cover the tomb were also saved and treasured up there.

Meanwhile the Commission of the Vestuary were intent upon forwarding the great object, and M. Moisant, who had already so generously advanced a large sum, determined to make a further pecuniary sacrifice in order to buy out, before the expiration of his term, the lodger who rented the cellar where they expected to find the site of the tomb. This bargain being effected, the different entrances to the cellar were walled up, that the workmen might have exclusive possession of it. All preparations having thus been made, on the evening of the feast of the Reversion of St. Martin operations were begun. M. Mandin and some workmen were enclosed in the unexplored cellar, and were to make their exit by effecting a passage

\* The Abbe Janvier calls it a "*pierre de Bourré fort blanche.*" It would appear to have been a species of sandstone.

through the wall dividing them from the adjoining cavity, where M. Dupont and the members of the Commission, with about thirty other persons and a party of workmen who were to labour in concert with those on the other side, were stationed. All were in the highest state of eager expectation. An ecclesiastic had brought down a harmonium ; several other priests were with him, and, amongst them, one who might be regarded as their patriarch, and that of the whole diocese, the venerable M. Petillault, Curé of St. Etienne de Chigny, who had served as choir-boy in the ancient Basilica. In the midst of this devout gathering, M. Dupont's bearing could not but arrest attention : serious, recollected, walking up and down at a grave and slow pace, with a book in his hand, silently praying, without uttering a word to any one, but now and then pausing awhile to fix a wistful look on that portion of the wall at which the men were working. It had been decided to make the breach at the spot marked by the red cross, and, in order to insure accurate co-operation and strict adherence to the line of the axis of the church, they had pierced a kind of loop-hole through the wall, by which they could communicate with their fellow-labourers on the other side.

The work was long and arduous, and it was now eleven o'clock at night, when suddenly in the enclosed cellar, while the men were plying their hammers, some fragments of white stone were detached, and fell to the ground. These evidently formed no part of the modern wall, but belonged to some ancient piece of masonry. M. Mandin looked at them attentively, and recognised the very species of stone described in the *procès verbal* ; he examined also the part laid bare, and found that at an interval of sixty-five centimetres from each

other were two little walls of white sandstone intersected transversely by a thick wall of modern construction, and imbedded within it. At their upper portion they exhibited the appearance of having originally had a vaulted surface uniting them; the beginning of the arch was clearly visible, but the weight of the superincumbent wall had, no doubt, crushed its centre. It was evident to M. Mandin that he had before him the two parallel sides of the little vault, or sepulchre, to which, after the ravages of the Huguenots, the ashes of St. Martin had been consigned, and where his body had originally lain. Communicating through the opening, he had stopped the labourers on the other side, and he now made a little sketch of the discovered masonry, which he passed through the hole to the members of the Commission, asking for instructions. No sooner had M. Dupont set eyes on the drawing than the previous knowledge he had acquired enabled him at once to entertain a firm conviction that the tomb of St. Martin was discovered. He immediately announced it to the kneeling crowd, by whom the news was received with joy indescribable, and with one accord all united in a solemn *Magnificat*, the old "acolyte of St. Martin," as he was called, intoning it with a voice which seemed to have regained the vigour of youth. The party on the other side joined in the hymn of triumph, and the chant was taken up alternately in each of the cellars with the most perfect regularity, as if the whole had been previously concerted. There was something wonderfully touching in this *Magnificat*, which none who took a part in it could ever forget.

While the work was thus cautiously proceeding, M.

Dupont hastened home, lest his absence, prolonged to so late an hour, might alarm his aged mother. She was not aware of what was going on, and was wondering that her son did not return. Perhaps that wonder was not immediately dispelled by his exclamation, in reply to her hurried inquiry: "Rejoice, my mother! At last we have found it, and we possess it!" His letters at that time overflow with the joy of his heart. The whole city of Tours, indeed, was excited by the discovery, interesting in so many points of view, and the next day, not only did the Archbishop and numbers of the clergy repair to the spot to witness the results of the excavation, but all the "savants" of the place, especially the archæologists, were eager to inspect them. M. Lambron de Lignim, the learned antiquary, who had found the *procès verbal* of 1686, was able to satisfy himself as well as his colleagues that the little vaulted cavity of white sandstone, described as the sepulchre of St. Martin in that document, corresponded perfectly, both in its nature and its dimensions, with the recent discovery. All, in short, acknowledged without hesitation that, if the veritable ancient sepulchre of St. Martin had not been found, its site, at least, had been established. But many persons were convinced that not only the place where the tomb had existed previously to its destruction by the Huguenots had been discovered, but the primitive tomb itself, the identical tomb constructed by St. Perpetuus, in which that holy bishop had enclosed the body of St. Martin sixty-four years after his death. Nor were good reasons wanting for this persuasion. Its great antiquity was proved by the character of the masonry and of the mortar; for, notwithstanding that sandstone, of which it was con-



structed, is very easy to cut, there was here not a trace of this process having been adopted. The work had, in fact, all the marks of belonging to the fifth century, when the art of cutting stone seems to have been lost in Gaul. The mortar was unmistakably ancient, being precisely similar to that employed by the Romans and Gallo-Romans in their palaces, amphitheatres, and fortresses. The form of this little edifice also proved it to have been intended to constitute the massive centre of an altar; and that it actually served that purpose seems more than probable. St. Gregory, though he does not say so in express terms, appears to imply as much where he more than once calls the tomb of the Saint of Tours "the holy altar," and in the early ages of the Church, as is well known, the August Sacrifice used to be offered on the tombs of martyrs and confessors.

This stone-tomb of St. Martin in the form of an altar, we learn from ancient documents, underwent several transformations. There was originally no opening in it, and it contained a sort of metallic coffin hermetically sealed, within which was the body of the saint, enveloped in a kind of purple stuff with osier bands. From the fifth to the sixth century it remained untouched, but it is certain that from the seventh to the twelfth centuries it was opened several times, and in 1323 the head of the saint was, at the desire of Charles le Bel, and by the Pope's permission, extracted and placed in a reliquary. The holy body, also enclosed, as stated, in a sort of osier basket, was withdrawn from its metallic case, and, we have reason to believe, was not replaced in its primitive altar-tomb. For, at the close of the twelfth century, the level of the ground in the apse of the church had been raised;

a new altar must therefore have been erected there, which would be more suitable for containing the relics, no longer accessible in their ancient and now buried receptacle. The church of St. Martin, it may be observed in passing, had been rebuilt several times, in the 5th, 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. It can now be readily understood how the old altar of St. Perpetuus had become, as it were, a little vault, completely hidden under the ground which covered it, and how, when the Huguenots sacked the old Basilica, burned the relics of the saint, of which a small portion was happily rescued by faithful hands from the combustion, and destroyed the altar, levelling to the ground all that was in the sanctuary, they may never have perceived the little vault underneath, which thus escaped their sacrilegious fury. Moreover, it was quite empty, and did not appear, had they even observed it, to be an object of veneration, and, if not, then it was an object of indifference to them. The relics which were found there by the Canons of the church in 1686, as recorded in the *procès verbal*, and which had been consigned to the old tomb after the profanation of the Basilica by the Protestants, in 1562, were then naturally transferred to the mausoleum above.

One further difficulty may occur to the reader. How did it happen that this little vault, constructed of such friable stone, should have escaped destruction when the Basilica was demolished at the Revolution, or, rather, when buildings began to be erected on its site? Nay, not only had this vault remained comparatively uninjured, but it was actually imbedded in a modern wall. The explanation of this curious circumstance furnishes us with another link in that chain of Providential occurrences by which the tomb

wherein the saint's body had reposed for a thousand years was preserved, to be so marvellously restored, in these latter days, to the veneration of the faithful. It was in that light that M. Dupont regarded it. The ground, as has been observed, was sold for building purposes after the demolition of the Basilica, when nothing further was attempted than levelling what was above ground, seeing that to dig up the foundations would have been a Herculean task indeed.\* A portion of the area was bought in common by two inhabitants of the town, who agreed to separate their shares by a partition wall. As this wall might have to bear the superincumbent weight of several stories in the projected houses, it must be solid, and have foundations of a certain depth. In excavating the ground this miniature vault was discovered, of the object and importance of which the proprietors were quite ignorant. It was in the way of their partition, for the foundation wall must strike right through it. One of the joint proprietors wished simply to destroy it, the other was of a contrary opinion, and said that he would keep the portion which was included in his share of the ground intact. "But what can you do with it?" asked his partner. "It is too small to convert into a cellar or turn to any use." "No matter," replied the other, "I will keep some of my bottles of wine or oil in it." The discussion continued, and waxed hot, in short, became a regular quarrel; the man who wished to keep the vault declaring that, if his property in it was touched, he would go to law about it. Fortunately they agreed to refer the question to arbitration, and chose a certain M. Nourisson, a good Christian, who, suspecting possibly that so singular a construction might have some importance, desired to save it, and

advised the parties not to dispute about so trifling a matter, but to fill up the cavity with some rag-stone for support, and let it remain imbedded in the partition wall. Later they could decide what to do about it.

Thus for the second time was the tomb preserved from destruction. A third time was when the Prefect, M. Pommereuil, as related, unconsciously spared it in tracing out the new street. M. Dupont beheld, in all this chain of events connected with St. Martin's tomb and church, a striking exemplification of Satan's obstinate conflict with the great Thaumaturgus, his formidable and sworn adversary, and often recalled the threat which Lucifer hurled against the Saint as he was crossing the Alps: "Wheresoever you may go, and whatever you may undertake, you will always find me on your path." To which Martin calmly replied, "The Lord is my strength and my support. Whom shall I fear?" This threat on the one side and confidence on the other M. Dupont thought were a kind of general prophecy of the whole life of St. Martin, and of the history of his tomb in particular. He, therefore, full of hope, took up the Saint's words, exclaiming with him, "The Lord is my strength and my support. Whom shall I fear?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## PROJECTS OF RECONSTRUCTION.

WE shall briefly dismiss the account of the progress made during M. Dupont's lifetime towards the reconstruction of the Basilica. He did not live to see the project become an accomplished fact. It has not become so yet, but it has not been abandoned, and, when France sees better days, we have every hope that the prayers of the holy man of Tours and of so many other faithful souls will be gloriously realised.

Measures were at once taken to give every facility to pilgrims. Both the cellars, now cleared out and thrown into one, were converted into a sort of crypt, and easy access provided. Crowds were continually pouring down into it; numbers of priests—and among them foreign prelates were to be seen—came to offer the Holy Sacrifice on the spot; parishes organised pilgrimages to venerate the holy tomb. The idea of the reconstruction of the Basilica no longer seemed a chimera. It had laid hold of the popular mind, and even the civil authorities looked favourably on it. Tours, prosperous at that time, was planning embellishments, and, among these, the project of a splendid church dedicated to the patron saint of the city was flattering to local pride, not to say that it would be a centre of attraction to strangers and pilgrims. The only question now was what the proportions of the intended edifice should be, and, naturally, each had his own opinion. Mgr. Guibert, who was watching the movement attentively, took a convenient opportunity

to address the municipality on the subject. The town was borrowing money for carrying out the improvements, and the Archbishop proposed to the administration the reconstruction of St Martin's church. The municipal council named a commission to make the needful examination, and, on their engineer's favourable report, accepted almost unanimously the Archbishop's proposal, themselves tracing the plan of that portion of the ancient Basilica which could be rebuilt, and indicating the ground which would have to be purchased for this purpose; at the same time fixing the sum of two millions of francs as what would be necessary before commencing operations. They also promised a contribution from the town.

Mgr. Guibert now put forth a pastoral addressed to the clergy and faithful of his diocese for the reconstruction of the Basilica. Without pronouncing upon the extent and proportions of the undertaking, he dwelt on the chief points. The edifice was to be raised on the foundations of the old church, which could be found by excavating the soil to a very slight depth, in order that the tomb should occupy, as heretofore, the end of the church's apse. The Basilica was to be connected with Charlemagne's fine tower, still in perfect preservation. He ordered at the same time quests for money to be made, and permitted even an appeal to the whole world for pecuniary assistance. "It is not for ourselves alone," he said, "that we desire to rebuild the sanctuary of St. Martin, but for all the Catholic faithful. The work we are commencing is a national work, since it has for its object to glorify the most illustrious saint of our country; it interests the whole Church also, for I feel in my innermost soul a presentiment which tells me that the re-establishment

of the *cultus* of St. Martin in its pristine fervour will be the signal and starting-point of a religious renovation for our country and for many others." Here were words to fill the heart of M. Dupont with joy and gratitude. It was the echo of all his secret aspirations for so many years. The Archbishop appointed a special commission for the rebuilding, composed of twenty-five members, amongst whom all the members of the first commission of the Vestibule were included. His appeal to his colleagues in the Episcopate was very successful. He promptly received fifty-four adhesions, and more than twelve pastorals speedily appealed for contributions to the piety of the faithful.

Satan was not going to permit so easy a victory. He was soon on St. Martin's path, according to his engagement. A re-action took place, into the particulars of which it is unnecessary to enter. First, the Prefect, contrary to all expectation, refused to approve the decision of the municipal council. This piece of stupidity was one of the sacrifices offered by the Empire to democracy. That it did not originate in any personal objection entertained by the head of the Government, but was only a party manoeuvre, may be gathered from the fact that, although the Emperor either would not or could not arrest the war of his agents against God and His saints, he became later himself a contributor, together with the Empress, to the funds for the reconstruction of the Basilica. The refusal of the Prefect encouraged all that hatred of religion and of everything good and holy which for a century past has been the animating spirit of the Revolution, to manifest itself afresh. The press now began to teem with offensive attacks on St. Martin and the promoters of the reconstruction; the commission



of the Vestuary and the municipal council itself being satirised and libelled in scurrilous verses and ballads. M. Dupont was neither alarmed nor surprised. "The worthy sons of the destroyers of his Basilica have vigorously set themselves against our work of St. Martin," he said; "nevertheless we hope, seeing that the order to build has come from Heaven. *Tempus reedificandi*." And then he had recourse, as usual, to prayer and pilgrimages, which never failed to be followed by blessings.

Mgr. Guibert had remained quite unmoved by the hostility excited against the undertaking. He had been slow to embark in it, but he was firm now in his resolve. When taking leave of his people before setting out for Rome at the close of January, 1862, he told them that he was going to ask for the Sovereign Pontiff's benediction on a work which interested France and the whole Church, but against which opposition was being excited. As for himself, he solemnly declared that he would allow no difficulty to stand in his way. The whole world knew his design, and he would follow it to the end; nothing but the impossible should arrest him. On his return with the Holy Father's blessing and warmest encouragement to proceed, he hastened to announce to the Mayor of Tours that he had already collected 400,000 francs, and would lay the plans for the Basilica before him at the close of the year. Money, indeed, was rapidly pouring in, and in the following year the sum in hand had risen to 600,000 francs. Graces also were multiplied, and the prelate in his yearly pastoral was able to record examples of extraordinary favours obtained through St. Martin's intercession by families and even by entire cities. Notwithstanding that, with his habitual

caution, and through the sense of responsibility attaching to his high office, he was ever on his guard against any weak credulity, he could not, he said, refrain from exclaiming, "The Finger of God is here!" "This work," he loved to say, "was not created by me. It sprang from the soul, the very bowels, I might say, of our religious Touraine. Scarcely had the idea become known before it was propagated with a rapidity quite electrical; it became at once popular and universal. It rather imposed itself upon me than was inspired by me."

The municipal council, in spite of the Prefect's discountenance and the demagogic manœuvres, persevered in its decision, but all persons did not display the same firmness. There is always a number of such people, who favour a cause while all goes smoothly, but who are ready to cry out for compromise at the least opposition. The compromise most widely discussed was to effect a large reduction in the size of the contemplated church; by this plan the whole nave was to be abandoned. But St. Martin had no intention of surrendering his territory. The zeal of the good was rather excited than repressed by obstacles. There was a general pilgrimage to Candes in the August of 1862, and the novena preparatory to the saint's festival, in November of that year, was celebrated with an affluence of worshippers and a splendour hitherto unexampled. The relics of the saint, which had been carried in procession the previous year, were again borne from the cathedral to the holy tomb. A platform had been raised at the foot of the Tower of Charlemagne, and from thence the Bishops present—and there were no less than five—gave their blessing to the assembled multitude. In the next year, 1863,

a chapel capable of containing 1,500 persons, which had been built to enclose the tomb and thus replace the little Oratory over the crypt which for three years had received the pilgrims who flocked to pay their homage to St. Martin, was opened and solemnly blessed by Mgr. Guibert on the 11th of November. Debates as to the size and proportions of the future Basilica were still hotly continued, even amongst those who favoured the work, and the Archbishop himself for some time would hear of nothing but a church, handsome and suitable indeed, but of restricted proportions. At present it seemed to him, at least, premature to reckon upon more. M. Dupont kept silence, never uttering a word which could be construed into a murmur against ecclesiastical authority, but, when at times the work, such as he desired it, appeared to be greatly compromised or endangered, he would say, "Come, it is time to have recourse to the great remedy;" and he proposed a pilgrimage. The "great remedy" never failed of its effect. Then he would raise his eyes rapturously to Heaven, and encourage his friends never to be distrustful of Providence, but to rely upon It and wait for Its appointed hour. "*Expectans expectavi*," he would say, for Scripture was ever in his mind and on his tongue.

It must not be supposed, however, that M. Dupont and his friends limited themselves to waiting and praying. The holy man's waiting did not mean inaction, but waiting in the sense of obedience to authority, never usurping its rights or infringing on the respect due to it, by pushing on ahead of its leadings or by the expression of any discontent at what might be regarded by irresponsible persons as slowness or excess of caution. The Archbishop, who

had to wait God's time, as they had to wait his, who, as their superior, represented to them God's authority, was full of zealous solicitude for the work no less than themselves, and, if he refrained from pronouncing as yet upon what its proportions should be, he was desirous that everything that was possible should be done under present circumstances to favour its extension. One, if not the chief, difficulty that stood in the way of a Basilica commensurate with the desires of M. Dupont and his friends was the number of houses erected on the ancient site. To purchase these houses was, of course, a most important object, for, if the Basilica could not be begun until the opposition made by the Government was withdrawn, all preliminary steps, at least, could and ought to be taken. What rendered this the more necessary was that the enemies of the project of reconstruction were desirous of appropriating, for purposes of embellishment, the ground on which these houses stood, and laying it out in squares and gardens, thus evicting St. Martin definitively from his little domain. Suddenly, however, they were greeted, in January, 1864, by the unwelcome piece of information that the Commission had bought a whole block of houses in the vicinity of the tomb, so that it was in possession of all the ground required for the projected church. The transaction had been conducted with the utmost secrecy and celerity. During the course of a fortnight, contracts were agreed upon and signed with about twenty different proprietors, the whole sum expended in the purchase being 550,000 francs, which was considered to be very reasonable.

No suspicion was entertained of what was going on until the bargain was effected, a circumstance which

is most surprising when it is considered how many individuals were interested in the negotiation; no wonder, then, that the success was attributed to the intervention of St. Martin himself and the holy angels, whose aid had been invoked. Collections continued to be steadily made; money flowed in, and the resort of worshippers to the chapel became so great that the Archbishop had to appoint a body of missionaries, the Oblates of Mary, to serve the sanctuary of St. Martin. The municipal council, which had hitherto continued favourable, underwent a serious modification by the elections of 1865. Democracy, which the Government desired to propitiate, was now in the ascendant, and its influence was quickly apparent in the council's revocation of the decision of 1861. The work could, it is true, dispense now with the pecuniary aid promised, and, moreover, Mgr. Guibert, immediately on the signing of the contract for the houses, had written to the Mayor of Tours to announce the fact to him officially, and at the same time to exonerate the town from its engagement to contribute a tenth of the expense of the reconstruction; nevertheless it might be considered almost impossible to begin building so long as the municipality was inimical.

We shall not pursue this subject any further; it will be sufficient to quote M. Léon Aubineau's words written in 1878: "For thirteen years the democratic authorities, which ruled the city in the last period of the Empire and have since perpetuated their despotic power by the help of the Republican Government—for thirteen years these authorities have opposed the popular desire and resisted a national undertaking. But devotion is not wearied. It persists, it hopes. Martin has vanquished other tyrants,

All this will end in the reconstruction of the Basilica, the pledge, the hope, the dawn of the resurrection of France: such is the conviction both of the Bishops and of the faithful."

During the Prussian invasion and the siege of Paris the tomb of St. Martin was the scene of almost uninterrupted prayer; the concourse of worshippers was sometimes truly marvellous. When peace had been restored, Mgr. Guibert having been translated to the see of Paris, Mgr. Truchaud, who succeeded him, diligently occupied himself with the "work of St. Martin." Considering that the absence of a definite plan was a great hindrance to progress and led to endless discussions, he caused one to be drawn up which took as its basis the ancient Basilica, such as it must have existed in the 11th century, not that standing in 1793, which had received many additions and modifications in different styles of architecture. The restored edifice was to be in the Roman style, of which an actual specimen may be seen in St. Sernin of Toulouse, constructed after the model of the old Basilica of St. Martin. The new plan was much appreciated, and obtained a gold medal prize at the Fine Arts Exhibition of Paris in 1875. It has been hung up on the staircase of the Archbishop's palace. The present occupant of the see, Mgr. Colet, inherits the zeal of his predecessor, and the Abbé Janvier tells us that he only waits for favourable circumstances to commence operations.

The Commission of the Vestuary is still the active centre of the work, and, so long as M. Dupont lived, continued to meet in his house. When age and infirmities confined him to his room he still aided his colleagues by his wise counsels, and they never left

him without being filled with renewed hope and confidence. From the slight sketch here given, we think it will appear beyond a doubt that to M. Dupont must be awarded the credit of being the originator and the main promoter of this undertaking. It was he who first seriously entertained the idea of rebuilding the Basilica, and, although from motives of humility and discretion he ever strove to keep himself personally out of sight, he was none the less the vivifying soul of the enterprise throughout, the spring which set the whole machine in motion; and we may add that to him was the work ascribed by the popular voice. How he had accomplished it was, it is true, an enigma to many, but none the less was it regarded as an unquestionable fact. If, therefore, this work, to the glory of God and honour of St. Martin, be ever completely realised, it must in justice be attributed mainly to the prayers and influence of this devout layman, raised up by God to be the type of a true Christian in this nineteenth century.

One further observation. M. Dupont's great object in the restoration of St. Martin's church was reparation. Without excluding other considerations, which weighed more or less with other persons, his idea was to perform an act of expiation for a deed of Satanic impiety. This is why he aspired to see, not merely a modern church erected, more or less spacious and beautiful, but one resting on the old foundation, and bearing, at least, some proportion in grandeur and majesty to that which had previously existed. By so doing he thought the present generation would offer some atonement to our Lord, and would vanquish St. Martin's perpetual adversary on a ground where he thought himself the invincible master and secured possessor.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## S A T A N.

M. DUPONT, as the disciple of St. Martin, had adopted his model's hatred of Satan. Every Christian, it is true, must of necessity hate the devil, if he truly loves God or his own soul, but in the subject of this biography hatred of the evil one was so pronounced, personal, and permanent as to form one of his special characteristics, and consequently deserves some special notice. As he ever lived in the presence of God, so he may be said to have lived in an abiding perception of Satan contending with God and man. No one more fully realised the assertion of the Apostle: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." \* He saw the devil's action more or less direct in a thousand things where others do not think of looking for it. Diabolical influence was evident to him, above all, in the progress of the Revolution. Its spirit was to him manifestly Satanic; it was, as it were, Satan visibly revealed. And since his efforts were more palpably active in these days, so it behoved all Christians to draw closer to our Lord. "The miserable creature," he said, "aims at swallowing down in one gulp the whole present generation, which has been so well disciplined to go blindly forward under his infernal inspiration." In conversing with others, particularly the young, he

\* Eph. vi. 12.

recommended them to be greatly on their guard against the devil, for he insinuated himself everywhere, into a game of cards, a guitar, a lock of curly hair, a spoonful of soup, &c. In the smallest obstacle which arose regarding the *cultus* of St. Martin he discovered the wiles of the malicious demon.

One day, on entering the provisional chapel, he saw the sacristan, the sweeper, and a priest gathered round the alms-box or, rather, the pillar used as such in foreign churches, and whispering to each other. They were, in fact, trying to turn the key, but none of them could make it move in the lock. M. Dupont was not at all surprised when they told him of their trouble. "It is another of Satan's tricks," he said, shrugging his shoulders. Then he took the key and dipped it in the holy water-stoop. "Now open," he said. The key turned at once with the greatest ease. In using holy water against Satan he was following St. Teresa's advice, who found it most efficacious. A little holy water, she declared, used with faith and humility would always put the devil to flight. Another instance of his faith in the power of holy water against Satan may be seen in the advice he gave a devout person how to combat the demon of detraction, which was, on leaving church and after taking holy water and making the sign of the cross, to touch the lips and tongue with the still wet finger. "The malicious one," he said, "will; at least, be some time without coming to sit there." Satan's fatal influence on the press was also patent to him, and regarded by him with horror. "Certainly," he said, "you may find the cause of all the scourges now afflicting the world, in the pen which Satan has enlisted in his service. Accordingly, he greatly honoured those who strove to

meet and resist him on his own ground, the public press. Armed with faith, he would say, they need not fear legions of evil spirits in battle array. "Courage!" he writes to one of those valiant champions, "courage! the head of the evil beast is rising up again in spite of his wounds. Oh, how long will he find eternity to be when the hour is come for his *repose* in the abyss! For the present he takes some pleasure after his fashion in the Garibaldis, the Renans, the spiritists. May the Lord deign to uphold your arm strong and firm, as He did that of Moses, enabling you to strike heavy blows on the bad beast, who thus impudently enthrones himself on our age, brutalised by luxury and sensuality."

He was very desirous to have Satan known and unmasked, for it is one of the fiend's devices in these times to get himself denied and ignored. This disguise serves his interests. It was most important, he thought, that people should perceive whom they were dealing with, and who it was that was contending with them; "not Monsieur this or Monsieur that, but the infernal beast, the bad beast, who has lost nothing by his ignoble fall save his sanctity; his power is still very great. He drags a long chain at this moment," he would add; "but I hope he will soon receive orders to go back into his kennel." Faith and prayer were the weapons with which to meet him. "The beast's halter is terribly slackened," he said, "and the rogue profits by it. So it is time to raise a hue and cry after him, and then, if he does not look as if he were going to obey, which always costs him very much, call to mind that fulminating word of our Lord: *Vade retro*.\* If we were always

\* St. Matthew xvi. 23.

animated by sentiments of faith, we should often make him spend some unpleasant quarters of an hour when he bars our way." There is something very remarkable in M. Dupont's hearty hatred of the "bad beast." It was not a mere hostility as to an enemy who sought to work him evil; he did not simply triumph in gaining a victory over him, but he loved to vex and displease him. In short, all the personal hatred and spite, if one may use the word, to be found in M. Dupont's composition,—and one might say he was literally incapable of a shadow of animosity or ill-will to any living creature—was all concentrated on Satan. One of his favourite methods for defeating and putting him to flight was to humiliate him, persuaded that nothing wounded his proud spirit so much as contempt. He was of opinion that there was no epithet more disagreeable and mortifying to Satan than that which is given him in Scripture, *antiquus serpens*, "the old serpent," \* which reminds him of his first crime against humanity, and of the humbling sentence pronounced upon him. Rendering it after his own fashion, M. Dupont used to call Satan "the old one." He said that nothing put him in a greater rage; it was sure to make him decamp at once. You have only to try, he would tell his friends. "Just say, Oh! Oh! old one, we know you; be off from this! He is proud, the old one is, and does not like being called by that name; it is a kind of insult which torments him and drives him away."

M. Dupont's Satan was not the Satan of Milton, still grand and sublime even in his fallen state. He could not have endorsed the Protestant poet's description:—

\* Apoc. xii. 9.

“His form had not yet lost  
All its original brightness ; nor appeared  
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscur'd : as when the sun, new risen,  
Looks through the horizontal misty air  
Shorn of his beams ; or from behind the moon,  
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone  
Above them all the Archangel.”

To M. Dupont, Satan was not grandeur obscured, but unmitigated ugliness, because unmitigated wickedness. Sin is disorder in the spiritual nature, producing spiritual deformity and loathsomeness, while beauty is the reflex and expression of moral loveliness, no vestige of which can be found in him who is wholly evil. His idea, therefore, of the arch-fiend was what many would call the vulgar idea. The devil with him had horns, hoofs, and a tail. It may be the vulgar idea, taking vulgar in its sense of popular, but it is also the Catholic idea which the people have best retained ; we may add that it enters into the great Catholic poet Dante's conception of the devil ; and indeed, if an evil spirit is to be manifested or figured in some visible form—and the visible is typical of the invisible—that form must be intensely detestable and frightful, and in another point of view intensely ludicrous ; for the ludicrous itself is created by disorder viewed on its less serious side, or simply as it affects the understanding and imagination apart from the moral sense, or, again, as it is found in mere material objects. Disproportion, for instance, which is a form of disorder, is at the root of caricature, which makes us laugh. Milton in his portraiture of Satan had a fallen human creature in his mind, not a fallen angel. A bad man has still some vestiges of natural goodness in him, often

revealing themselves unexpectedly, and it is this which has made it possible to impart a romantic and seductive interest to unprincipled and worthless characters, whether heroes of history or of fiction. When some flashes of natural kindness or generosity are elicited in such men, the combination produces a certain charm. We have the sun looking through the mist, to which Milton compares his devil, and the contrast is felt to be piquant and captivating, especially by unhealthy imaginations debased by a craving for the sensational.

M. Dupont rallied Satan about his horns, his snout, and his tail. Comparing him to a furious dog, he amused himself by fancying him seated on the ruins of St. Martin's, like a big, fat, bloated beast, who for long years had retained peaceable possession of them; then he depicted his rage and spite when he would have to turn out and see himself disgracefully deprived of a spot where he thought he would be master evermore. The mere idea of Satan's disappointment delighted the servant of God, and made him laugh with all his heart. The devil was often the subject of his merriment in his conversations with intimate friends. He would address Satan as if he was one of the party, with a rude and contemptuous familiarity, quizzing and bantering him, and applying to him epithets and expressions of a burlesque and comic character. Sometimes he would represent him as biting his own tail from sheer anger and vexation, sometimes as chewing it or smoking it like a cigar. One would have thought he actually saw him thus engaged. "That animal, that hog," he would say, "takes his own tail to suck at it! What good can he find in it?" It may seem strange that a man so remarkable for his refinement, his good taste and good manners, should indulge

in language and jokes of this sort, even as directed against the devil, but so it was; when he spoke of Satan his language underwent a complete change. The French vocabulary did not seem to furnish him with terms sufficiently opprobrious and vituperative to express the species of hatred with which this enemy of God and man inspired him. M. Dupont was, indeed, a thorough gentleman, but he certainly did not act the gentleman to Satan; neither did he wish to do so. Courtesy and refinement were in him the outcome and expression of charity, not the mere conventional polish acquired by education and frequenting good society; so, as he had no charity and nothing but hatred for Satan, he kept no terms with him. How often, even in men's dealings with each other, do we not see common civility laid aside where there is a loss of charity! Who may not have noticed how an angry man, nay, an angry Christian, will at times forget his manners! This never happened to our holy man, who could be angry without sinning, and never treated his fellowman with contempt were he the worst of sinners. To the evil one he desired to be contemptuous and abusive, and so he was, some might think, coarsely abusive. But, then, Satan in his eyes was such a filthy pig! Nothing, it may be added, was more entertaining to his friends than these irrepressible outbreaks. His native turn for raillery and satire had here full scope, and its originality was enhanced by his speaking gestures, the play of his features, and the bursts of gaiety with which the whole was intermingled. His friends never forgot these amusing sallies. He had a little print of Satan, which he seemed to keep for the purpose of insulting him. It usually hung under our Lady's image, because she had crushed his head, but



sometimes, particularly if assailed by any temptation, he would take it down, jump on it, and even spit on it; or he would put it on his chair and sit upon it.

It might be expected that Satan, in revenge for so much ill treatment, would play the holy man some ugly tricks, as he did St. Martin and so many other saints. M. Dupont was very reserved in speaking about himself, particularly in connection with anything supernatural, but certain observations escaped him in his correspondence with familiar friends which show that he was not exempt from this species of assault. One incident to which we find him alluding in a letter, and which ensued on some special insult he had addressed to Satan, he plainly considers to be preternatural, although in one way he makes light of it, calling it only a distressing nightmare. Yet, the result of this nightmare, this horrible vision of an infuriated beast rushing at him, from which he escaped into a hole, was that he actually found himself in a hole in the brick flooring of the room, and lying on his right side, although he would naturally have fallen on the left side. "Now, what proves," he says,—“and I should not try to prove it to any one else,—that Satan was concerned in that terrible fall of mine, was that, lying on the floor, I said, as I suddenly awoke, ‘My God, I thank Thee,’ and kissed the ground. My right elbow has been a good deal scarified, but that is all.” An intelligent and devout layman told the Abbé Janvier that his friend M. Dupont had often mentioned to him the conflicts he had to sustain against Satan when taking his repose during the nights of Adoration. Once, in particular, he had been raised up by his infernal enemy, twisted round in the air, and then let fall right across his little bed. Another individual,

quest, who also shared in the Nocturnal Adoration similar testimony, and said that M. Dupont lodged to several persons who were talking of diabolical agencies, that he had been twice consecutively thrown out of his bed in that same hall of repose where they were conversing very soon after the Adoration had been set on foot. He pointed out the exact spot where he fell. To Satan the Nocturnal Adoration must have been peculiarly hateful, and the great promoter of it especially obnoxious.

He seems not to have been left in peace in other places. At Bourbon-l'Archambault, (where he used to go to take the waters, a respectable lady worthy of all confidence, with whom he lodged, related the following occurrence with reference to the holy man's nocturnal conflicts with the devil. It was about the year 1858 or 1859, she did not well remember which, when M. Dupont occupied a room on the second floor, next to that of the Curé of Néronde in the diocese of Nevers. During the night the Curé heard a noise as of a violent and prolonged struggle; he became much alarmed, and, thinking there was a robber in the house, who had got into his neighbour's room, he in his terror bolted his own door. Similar noises occurred on the following night, and then the Curé reported the fact to the mistress of the house. At breakfast, this lady spoke of the disturbance of which her guests complained, and laughingly accused M. Dupont of having been "fighting with the devil." As he remained silent, she then altered her tone, and inquired whether he really needed any assistance, for she feared he was seriously incommoded in some way. "No," he hastened to reply, "I do not need any human assistance. It would be useless."

One of his habitual weapons against the devil, which he recommended to all, was the medal of St. Benedict; but of this sufficient mention has been already made. As for himself, he feared not Satan, strong in the armour of faith, hope, and charity. "Let us advance in the love of God," he would say, "and Satan will be forced to fly; he can be at his ease only in his own fire of Hell ever since he admitted hatred into his heart in place of charity." Love, he declared, was torture to the fiend, and the sure guard of the heart against him. He has told us, too, where that love is to be found. "Since we cannot descend into Hell to chain up Satan there, let us go to the Heart of Jesus in search of the weapons wherewith to combat him on earth."

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## CHAPTER XV.

### HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BEFORE we turn our attention more exclusively to M. Dupont's devotion to the Holy Face, we must dwell awhile on another devotion which signally distinguished him, and contributed to make him one of the greatest Christians of these modern times,—devotion to Holy Scripture. He early manifested his strong attraction for the Written Word. The oldest letters of his extant abound in citations from the Bible, proving his close familiarity with the sacred text. He may be said to have known the Scriptures almost by heart, so unceasing had been his perusal of the Sacred Books. And not only did he read and re-read them, thus imprinting them on his memory, but he was fond of

commenting on their contents, which he did in a style of his own, neither theological nor exegetical, but rather in a practical, and, at times, even mystical manner, and that with an ingenious opportuneness and largeness of view which would not have been unworthy of one of the Fathers of the Church. In order to facilitate his study, he had a large reading-desk in the middle of his room, on which were placed two big folio Bibles, one in Latin, the other in French. He was so well at home in all portions of the Holy Scriptures that he could place his finger, at once and without hesitation, upon any text he wanted to quote or refer to ; in short, he was a sort of living concordance. He loved to compare the Old and New Testaments, illustrating and expounding the one by the other. This was his way of studying Scripture, rarely having recourse to learned commentators ; not because he undervalued them, but from the nature of his mind, which grasped ideas rapidly and seized upon their connection with a happy facility. He collated one text with another, and light seemed to flash upon him by their approximation. He discerned also in them wonderful analogies and coincidences with the events of the day. His mind revelled in these discoveries, and the felicitous applications he often made edified, instructed, and delighted not a few of his hearers. It introduced them, as it were, into a new and untrodden region, for many souls, it must be confessed, find all dry and sterile in a field which to him was so fruitful and luxuriant, partly from having been deficient in their study of the text of Holy Writ, but still more, perhaps, from their failing to dwell upon and penetrate its hidden meanings. They have contented themselves with meditating on the mysteries of the Faith, assuredly sufficient for salvation and sancti-

fication, but, the mine of spiritual wealth contained in the Word of God being left comparatively unexplored, their devotion cannot fail of being less rich, and their mind less filled with holy thoughts and suggestions. Truly could M. Dupont say with David, "O how I have loved Thy law, O Lord! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are Thy words to my palate, more than honey to my mouth! Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths. Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul has sought them. The declaration of Thy words giveth light, and giveth understanding to little ones." Indeed, he might have adopted, as the expression of his own deepest feelings and passionate love, every word of the 118th Psalm, that grand canticle of praise of God's Word.

It must not be concluded, however, from what has been said that he neglected theological and critical exposition of Scripture, although for practical benefit he relied more on prayer and devout meditation than on the consultation of Biblical annotators. He had a valuable adviser, as regards the mere scientific province of Scripture study, in an erudite and pious priest, who was also his confessor, M. Allouard, an excellent Hebrew and Greek scholar, well versed besides in the exegetical literature of modern times, especially that of Germany. Every Sunday evening he had a regular invitation to M. Dupont's table, when they conversed on religious topics, and particularly on Holy Writ. The learned Abbé took a lively interest in the ideas and Biblical interpretations of his penitent, and communicated to him in return his own reflections, which were always received with intelligent respect and much docility. What with his own assiduous study and the profit he thus derived from other sources, M. Dupont

had attained a great insight into difficult passages of Scripture, and had a singular gift of expounding them to others. No one could talk long to him without his quoting some passage from the Bible, which he did quite naturally, but with an unction of piety and with a manifest love which made it very touching. He seemed, like the Psalmist, to taste the sweetness of the Word; he pronounced it with unaffected reverence, and often several times over, with an increasing enthusiasm and admiration at each repetition.

This was one of the things which made the most impression on men and women of the world when they visited him. Some casual observation being made, he would go to his great desk, open the Bible, and begin to comment on a text so lucidly that they could have listened to him for hours. A good lady of Tours, who used to take the greatest delight in these improvised commentaries, has related how a little girl of hers would whisper to her father when they reached the holy man's door, "Oh, don't let us go there, for Mama will begin the Bible with M. Dupont, and we shall never get away." Another lady, who had long and intimately known the servant of God, expressed the greatest regret—she might almost call it remorse, she said—at not having profited by her many opportunities to take notes of all that she had seen, and heard him say. But it was not merely lay men and women who admired his remarkable and deep interpretations of Scripture, competent judges among the clergy held his gift in like esteem; and this same lady relates how the Abbé Boullay, already mentioned, a very competent judge, for he was well versed in Biblical learning, said to her one day, "M. Dupont has a deeper insight into Holy Scripture than any one

I know." He used at one period to visit frequently the Superior of the Seminary, the Abbé Manduit, for the purpose of conferring with him on matters relating to the Vestuary of St. Martin; and, the Abbé Janvier being at that time one of the professors, he, along with the other masters of the institution, spent the evening in company with the holy man on several occasions. He says that they used adroitly to turn the conversation on some text of Scripture in order to draw him out, when, if it did not strike him that he was engrossing the conversation, a fact which they took care to disguise from him, he would run on for some time, they all listening in delighted astonishment at his skill in interpreting the passage and his happy way of applying it.

But a still stronger proof may be cited of the esteem in which the clergy held his understanding and exposition of the Word of God. Mgr. d'Outremont, Bishop of Mans, having delivered a discourse before the members of the Catholic and Social Union of Touraine, was cordially congratulated afterwards by his countrymen and former colleagues in the metropolitan chapter of Tours on the brilliant success of his address, and particularly on the admirable and ingenious use he had made of certain passages from the Gospel, on which he had commented in the form of a sort of homily, after the pattern of the Fathers, which several times, indeed, had elicited the applause of his audience. The prelate, who was aware that the Abbé Janvier was engaged in writing the life of M. Dupont, interrupted these expressions of commendation by saying, "Address your congratulations to M. Dupont, and not to me. Holy Scripture is, doubtless, my great resource whenever I have to speak in



public, but, if I am ever successful in that way, I declare that I owe it to M. Dupont. It is from him that I have borrowed this method of interpreting Scripture." And then the Bishop related, in presence of several ecclesiastics of Tours gathered round him, how, during the intimate relations which subsisted between him and M. Dupont at the time when he was Counsellor of the Prefecture, and again when he was Vicar of the Cathedral, their conversation had continually turned on Holy Scripture. "It was he," said Mgr. d'Outremont, "who gave me a taste for this study; in this respect he was to me a director, a model, and a master. A number of interpretations and ideas of his about particular texts I have retained in my mind; they recur to my memory when I am preparing to speak, and I am happy in being able to seek inspiration from them and turn them to account."

Every part of the Bible, it has been observed, was familiar to him, but there were certain personages in the Old Testament who had a special grandeur in his eyes, and who stood out in marked relief. Among these was Nabuchodonosor. M. Dupont regarded his conversion as one of the most splendid examples of Divine mercy, and he felt it to be singularly consoling to contemplate the action of grace in those souls who, through faith, composed the Church of Jesus Christ before His Incarnation. Those words of St. Paul, he said, "Where sin had abounded, grace did much more abound,"\* were peculiarly applicable to the Babylonian King. At the beginning of his reign he had desired, in his inordinate pride, to be adored as "god of the earth," and none to be honoured save him-

\* Rom. v. 20.

self alone.\* At the height of his power, he sets up his own image, and calls on the whole world to worship it. Whosoever refuses is to be cast into a burning fiery furnace. We all know the story of the heroic refusal of the three holy children: how God sent His angel to deliver them, and how Nabuchodonosor was vouchsafed the privilege, not only of beholding them alive in the midst of the furnace, but of having his eyes opened to discern their heavenly companion. M. Dupont drew attention to the remarkable fact that, although the king recognised only an angel in that supernatural being, nevertheless he was moved to say, "The form of the fourth is as the Son of God;"† thus being the first to express the Name of the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, of Him who made Himself Man to save us. But, although the king confessed that the Most High God had done wonders, and issued a decree that whatever people should blaspheme Him should be destroyed, for that no other God could save in this manner, yet the proud monarch was not yet converted.

To those who have had the opportunity of reading any of the inscriptions which these Asiatic tyrants caused to be engraved on the stones of their now ruined palaces, and which scientific men of our day have been enabled to decipher, memorials as they are of the pride, arrogance, ostentatious lust of dominion, and cruelty of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, it will not be at all surprising to read of this obduracy; rather is there cause for admiration that grace was able at last to bend the will of one who was the very impersonation of pride. It won the victory, however, at the

\* Judith v. 29.

† Daniel iii. 92.

price of an unexampled humiliation, which Daniel desired to spare the monarch, but he would not hearken. Driven from the company of men, Nabuchodonosor is degraded for seven years to the condition of the beasts of the field. This prince, after his trial, appeared to M. Dupont as invested with extraordinary grandeur. He saw in him a representative of the abasement of man before God, in which man's true greatness is to be found. "I can still see M. Dupont," says a celebrated writer, "as he spoke the words, and never was I so much struck by him as on that day. It was after dinner. He was standing up before his desk, his eyes fixed on the Bible, opened at the prophecies of Daniel. He was endeavouring to read, and the day was sinking. 'Give me a light,' he said to his faithful friend, M. d'Avrainville, and then he read, in a tone of deep and singular humility, the words of Nabuchodonosor: 'I lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my sense was restored to me. And I blessed the Most High, and I praised and glorified Him who liveth for ever, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing before Him.'"<sup>\*</sup> At this moment M. Dupont is described as looking perfectly majestic. The words of Scripture setting forth the nothingness of man, and the sovereign dominion of God, had found in him a living echo.

Heliodorus was another imposing figure in his eyes, and his conversion, after his miraculous flagellation by angels, another glorious testimony to the sovereign power of God, and especially to His awful presence in His holy place, as Heliodorus bore witness before the earthly sovereign who had sent him to plunder the

<sup>\*</sup> Daniel iv. 31, 32.

Temple.\* “Will the sacrilegious robbers of our day,” said M. Dupont, alluding to the despoilers of the Holy See, “have the chance of a conversion as beautiful as that of Heliodorus? Let us pray for this.” He took a great delight in considering the typical character of persons and events under the old dispensation. Eliseus in particular he viewed as a striking figure of our Lord, as he drew out for his friend, M. d’Avrainville, in a little paper which has been preserved; but for Job, whom he held to be a perfect type of our suffering Lord, he had the strongest predilection. “One day,” relates a friend of his, “when I went to pay him one of my ordinary visits, I had scarcely wished him good morning when, without returning my salutation, he apostrophised me thus: ‘Do you sometimes pray to the good man, Job?’ This question struck me at first as very whimsical. I replied, ‘I must own that I have never thought about him. Yet, with my violent, irascible temper, I ought indeed to ask him for patience, which I greatly need.’ He immediately rejoined, ‘You are wrong not to invoke him. Read.’ And then he led me in front of his desk, and read these words to me out of the Book of Job: ‘Go to my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust; and my servant Job shall pray for you: his face will I accept, that folly be not imputed to you.† You see, my friend, God promises to grant Job’s prayer, a promise which he has not personally made to any one else in the Holy Books.’ He added that we never lose our time in praying for others; it was when he was praying for his friends that Job was delivered.”

\* 2 Machabees iii. 38, 39.

† Job xlii. 8.

Scripture was to him the practical rule of life. If any difficult question arose, he would say, "Let us see what the Master teaches on this subject;" and he had immediate recourse to his Bible. It was also consolation to him in affliction, not only in his earthly sorrows, as he well knew by experience, but a heavenly manna likewise under spiritual privations, particularly when, in the closing years of his life, he was debarred through his infirmities from daily Mass and Communion. "Read," he said to a friend, "the last chapter of Daniel. During these last days, when I have been disabled from going to church, I have found in the repast which the angel caused Daniel to receive, a striking figure of spiritual communion." But his veneration for the Word of God inspired him with a remarkable act of homage, perhaps a singular act: of all the great lovers of Holy Scripture he is the first, so far as is known, whom piety has induced to honour it like the Blessed Sacrament, by keeping a lamp burning before it day and night. The idea originated in him from his ardent desire for reparation. He wished to expiate the crime of blasphemy which is daily committed by impious men, by the unbelieving, and by ignorant Christians, who deny the divine inspiration of our Holy Books and see in them mere human and ordinary utterances. "Scripture," he said, "is the Face of God; before that Face, as before the Holy Face, the fire ought to burn day and night." And again he said, "I see Jesus Christ whole and entire in each word of Scripture. Jesus Christ cannot be divided." The day on which he realised this idea deserves to be recorded. It was the 29th of March, 1865. He did it quietly, and without apparatus, as he performed all his acts. It was only his most

intimate friends and close observers who took any note of it. He had occasion, however, to write that day to his friend, M. des Mousseaux, and he ends with these words: "Let us together repeat that ravishing verse of the 118th Psalm: '*Deprecatus sum Faciem tuam in toto corde meo; miserere mei secundum eloquium tuum.*'" \* Now, observe, dear friend, that it was at the moment when for the first time (that is, to-day) I placed a lamp before the Holy Scriptures, that I remarked the appropriateness of this prayer. The lamp is at the corner of my bureau facing my great Bible, and I, miserable creature, am between the two lights in reparation of blasphemy." The other light to which M. Dupont alludes was that which always burned before the Holy Face; and there was he, the man of prayer and reparation, commonly to be found burning inwardly with the fire of charity. "For a long time," he said, "I had the thought of placing a lamp before the Word of God, to pay homage to it. A circumstance which occurred constrained me to act upon the idea, and you are the first to whom I have mentioned it." For the rest of his life this lamp continued to burn. He would discreetly point it out to some of his friends, particularly to priests who visited him, expressing, in the words of the Psalmist, his double mission of reparation before the Holy Face and before the Holy Bible. Holy Scripture and the Holy Face made up henceforth his whole life. In his will he expressed the wish, in bequeathing his Bible, that it should continue to be honoured with a lamp. This desire has been realised beyond his hopes; for in the very room where he so long venerated it, and which is

\* "I entreated Thy Face with all my heart; have mercy on me according to Thy Word."—Psalm cxviii. 58.

converted into a chapel, his dear Bible is open on the self-same desk with its light before it. It corresponds with that which honours the Holy Face; and the two, in concert with the lamp which burns before the Most Holy Sacrament, impart to this oratory a peculiar character, well calculated to move to fervour the hearts of worshippers and inspire them with ardent desires of reparation.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### COMMENCEMENT OF THE CULTUS OF THE HOLY FACE FROM 1851 TO 1856.

AMIDST all M. Dupont's manifold acts of devotion and holy undertakings we have seen one special object ever occupying his mind, the idea of reparation. It grew upon him more and more, and was at last to develop itself in a new form, to absorb and dominate his whole life, and make him, if not the founder, at least the leader and initiator of a work marvellously adapted to the needs of the Church at large, and of France in particular, in the present times. He became, in short, the great and well-nigh perpetual adorer of the Holy Face, and, if ever a mission received a supernatural attestation of its origin—we speak, of course, with all due submission to what the judgment of the Church may be — that of Léon Dupont had this seal set upon it.

We have seen what his relations were with Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre on the subject of the work of reparation for blasphemy, and the share he had in



promoting it; we have also seen that what struck him most in the communications which this holy soul received was the means of reparation indicated by our Lord, namely the *cultus* of His outraged Face in His dolorous Passion. Sister Saint-Pierre, under obedience, informed the Mother Prioress, in the form of letters, of all the revelations made to her, just as they occurred, and these were shown to M. Dupont, who meditated deeply upon them. Thus, on the 11th of November, 1845, Sister Saint-Pierre wrote: "Our Lord transported me in spirit on the way to Calvary, and gave me a vivid representation of the pious office which St. Veronica rendered to Him, who with her veil wiped His Most Holy Face covered with spittle, dust, sweat, and blood. Then this Divine Saviour gave me to understand that the impious actually renew by their blasphemies the outrages done to His Holy Face, and I comprehended that all these blasphemies which they cast at the Divinity, whom they cannot reach, fall, like the spittle of the Jews, upon the Holy Face of our Lord, who has made Himself the victim for sinners. I understood then how our Lord said that, by applying oneself to the exercise of making reparation for blasphemy, the same service was rendered to Him as the pious Veronica performed; and that He regarded those persons with eyes of the same complacency as that with which He looked on St. Veronica at the time of His Passion." "Our Lord," said the Sister in another letter, "caused me to know that this august Face, offered to our adoration, was the ineffable mirror of the divine perfections, perfections which are contained and expressed in the Most Holy Name of God. I understood that, as the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the sensible object offered to our

adoration to represent His immense love in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, so, in like manner, the Holy Face of our Lord is the sensible object offered to our adoration to repair the outrages committed by blasphemers against the majesty and sovereignty of God, of which this Holy Face is the figure, the mirror, and the expression; and that by the virtue of this Holy Face, offered to the Eternal Father, we may appease His anger and obtain the conversion of the impious and of blasphemers." These ideas were continually developed and illustrated by a series of revelations which the Sister received during several years, and they laid strong hold of M. Dupont's mind, which continued to work upon them after the pious Carmelite had passed away from earth. He perceived how practical and opportune was the *cultus* of the Holy Face considered in this light. That Divine Face had always had Its faithful and devout adorers, but what was new and peculiarly adapted to the wants of our age was the constituting It the exterior and sensible sign of those works of reparation of which the world, and especially France, stood in so much need. It was this which delighted his soul in the words addressed by our Lord to the Sister.

The following passages charmed him particularly. Our Lord said to her, "By this Holy Face you will perform prodigies." How truly was this promise to be hereafter realised through his instrumentality! And again: "Even as money stamped with the prince's effigy purchases everything in an earthly kingdom, even so with the precious coin of My Sacred Humanity, that is, My Adorable Face, you will obtain by offering It all that you will in the Kingdom of Heaven." And again: "According to the care you will take to repair

My visage disfigured by blasphemers, so will I take care of yours which has been disfigured by sin. I will imprint My visage afresh upon it, and will make it as beautiful as it was when it issued from the baptismal font. There are men on earth who are skilled in restoring bodies, but I alone can be called the restorer of souls to the image of God. This, then, is the grace which I promise to grant to all who shall apply themselves to pay to My Adorable Face the honour and worship which are due to It, with the intention of repairing, by their homage, the insults which It receives from blasphemers." Our Lord again showed her an example of the virtue of His Divine Face in the case of St. Peter. "This Apostle had by his sin effaced the image of God in his soul, but Jesus turned His Holy Face towards the unfaithful Apostle, and he became penitent. Jesus looked at Peter, and Peter wept bitterly. This Adorable Face is as the seal of the Divinity, which has the virtue of re-printing on souls which apply to It the image of God."

One of the last of those communications made to the Carmelite nun which produced so profound an impression on the servant of God was this: "Our Lord caused me to see that the impious, by their blasphemies, attack His Adorable Face, and that faithful souls glorify It by the praises they address to His Name and to His Person. There is, in fact, something mysterious in the face of a man who is despised. Yes, I see that his name and his face have a special connection. Behold a man distinguished by his name and his merits in presence of his enemies. They do not lay hands on him to strike him, but they load him with insults, they treat his name with bitter derision,

in the place of those titles of honour which are due to him. Observe what then passes on the face of this outraged man. Would you not say that all the injurious words which issue from the mouth of his enemies come to rest on his face and cause him a real torment? You see that face covered with blushes, shame, and confusion. The opprobrium and ignominy which it suffers are to him more cruel to endure than all actual torments inflicted on other parts of his body. Here, then, is a faint image of the Adorable Face of our Lord outraged by the blasphemies of the impious. Now, figure to yourself this same man in presence of his friends, who, having learned the insults which he has received from his enemies, are eager to console him, to treat him in a manner becoming his dignity, and do homage to his great name, by applying to him all his honourable titles. Do you not see how the face of that man reflects the sweetness of the praises addressed to him? Glory rests upon his brow, and, spreading thence, illuminates his whole countenance. Joy sparkles in his eyes, there is a smile on his lips; in a word, these faithful friends have healed the painful wounds of that face outraged by his enemies; glory has chased away the opprobrium. This is what the friends of Jesus do by the work of reparation; the honour which they pay to His Name rests on His August Brow, and rejoices His Most Holy Face."

M. Dupont never ceased to venerate Sister Saint-Pierre's memory, or wavered in his conviction that she, [the heretofore poor, unlettered workwoman of Brittany, had been divinely enlightened, and moved to utter things far above her own natural capacity to have conceived; but as yet his way to carry out her

desired work of reparation by the *cultus* of the Holy Face had not been made plain to him. It was towards the close of Lent, 1851, that an accident occurred which led to his first step in embodying and giving visible form to the devotion which had so long filled his heart. The Prioress of the Carmelites, who was well acquainted with his dispositions, presented him with two copies of the Holy Face, from St. Veronica's veil preserved at the Vatican. She had received them from the Prioress of the Benedictines of Arras, with whom she had kept up close relations for some years. Profiting by an opportunity of procuring a number of authentic copies of this holy relic, the convent had obtained them from Rome, and the zeal of the religious, who had taken a lively interest in the revelations of Sister Saint-Pierre, made them glad to circulate them. At the request of the Prioress of the Carmelites of Tours, they sent some for distribution to different persons and, in particular, two for M. Dupont. He received them on Palm Sunday. Retaining for himself the least perfect—there was a slight crease visible from a fold in packing it—he had the other well framed, and bestowed it on the Nocturnal Adoration; and it may still be seen in the parlour of the Priests of the Mission.

A miraculous fact in connection with St. Veronica's veil, of which the servant of God had heard two years previously, added to his respect for the facsimile which he kept in his possession. In the month of January, 1849, during Pius IXth's exile at Gaëta, prayers by order of his Holiness were offered in all the churches of Rome to implore the Divine mercy. On this occasion the wood of the True Cross and the veil of St. Veronica were exposed for public veneration at

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t. Peter's. Now, upon this veil the features of our Lord Jesus Christ had become very faint; but on the third day of the exposition an extraordinary change came over them, and the Countenance of our Lord was distinctly visible in the midst of a soft light. The impression produced on all by this prodigy was indescribable. An Apostolic Notary was called, who drew up an act to attest the truth of the manifestation, which lasted for three hours. Many silk veils upon which the Holy Face had been depicted were brought to touch the miraculous relic. M. Dupont, who relates these facts, says that the veils were sent to France, from which we may with probability infer that those which he received were of the number.

Let us now hear his own account of the first use he made of the venerable picture which he had kept for himself, and which he had framed very simply in black wood. "I hung it," he says, "in my room on the left-hand side of the fire-place, in a recess, over a small piece of furniture,\* on which a lamp could be conveniently set." Several little pious pictures also found their place there. This was on Wednesday in Holy Week, the day, as M. Aubineau observes, on which our Lord was sold by Judas, who would be the prince of blasphemers if Satan had not preceded him. "Scarcely," continues M. Dupont, "had I installed it, when a sudden feeling arose in my mind. I said to myself, Can this representation of the Divine Face of the Saviour of Men be exposed in the house of a

\* This piece of furniture, his friend, M. Léon Aubineau, tells us, was a *secrétaire* in which he locked up his instruments of discipline; it was full also of relics and other devotional treasures, and had a marble slab upon it. The lamp was a simple night-light in a glass cup filled with olive oil.

Christian during this Great Week of His Passion, and no exterior sign of respect, adoration, and love be paid to it? No, assuredly, it shall not be so. And thus it was that I had at once the thought of lighting a lamp before the Holy Face, with the intention of burning it only during the remainder of Holy Week. I immediately put my thought into execution; but soon another suggested itself. It was in this room that I habitually received those who came to visit or to speak with me; it was there I had my writing-table. Now, it occurred to me that everybody would be asking me what that lighted lamp was for in broad day-light. I ruminated upon what my answer should be, and I thought of one which satisfied me. Yes, I said to myself, that will do. I will reply to any one who asks me why I have a lamp burning at mid-day, 'It is to inform those who come to see me that, when the affair which brought them is concluded, they must either talk about God or retire.' And I was minded to write these words on a square bit of paper as a sort of notice, and put it on my writing-table, that I might show it when necessary: 'Every one is free when at home; but when he is in my house, after having transacted the business for which he came, he must either go or remain to converse about God.'

"That day and the next passed over without any question being asked me. Some did not observe my lamp, others supposed that I had a pious intention in lighting it. On Good Friday a commercial traveller made his way in to offer me some of his Bordeaux wines. I gave him my answer, and it so surprised him that I had to repeat it twice. It furnished the opportunity of talking to him about religion. He



remained more than an hour listening to me, and, having entered the room in a state of indifference, to say the least, he left me almost converted, and carrying away with faith some of the water of La Salette. I do not know what became of him. On the following day, Holy Saturday, our Lord began to manifest His intentions in this wise. I received a visit from a very pious person, Mlle. X., with whom I was acquainted, and who had very bad eyes; she complained, on entering my room, of the acute pain she was suffering in them from the cold wind which was blowing and the dust flying. She had come to me on business. As I was engaged in writing, I begged her to wait a few minutes, and meanwhile invited her to pray before the Holy Face. She profited by the occasion to ask to be cured. Soon I joined her, and knelt down, and we said some prayers together. As I rose, it occurred to me to say to her, 'Put a little oil of this lamp on your eyes.' She dipped her finger in the oil and rubbed her eyes with it. Taking a chair to sit down, she exclaimed in astonishment, 'My eyes no longer pain me.' I had to give her a little oil to take away with her, as she was leaving Tours for Richelieu, her usual place of residence."

M. Dupont then proceeds to notice a still more striking cure, which took place on Easter Tuesday, in the case of a young man who came on some business. He was lame, and walked with pain and difficulty. The servant of God rubbed his leg with the oil of the lamp, praying to the Holy Face. The young man was cured on the spot, and began to run round the garden with the greatest ease. M. Dupont's previous intention of taking away the lamp when Holy Week was over, had yielded to an opposite feeling, which seemed

to forbid it. When the month of May had arrived it appeared to bring a fresh motive for not discontinuing this devotion, which he knew was not opposed to the mind of the Church. Then followed the months of the Sacred Heart and of the Precious Blood, but by this time consolations had begun to abound, and above twenty persons had experienced relief in very serious maladies. "We began then," he says, "to recite before the picture the Litanies of the Holy Face, composed by the poor little workwoman of Brittany, Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre. Prodigies were multiplied. I do not undertake to enter into the detail of the cures effected by the oil: of cancers, of ulcers, internal and external, of cataracts, of stiffened joints, of deafness, &c., all very numerous. Since the 2d of December"—he was writing on the 3d May, 1852—"I have given away more than eight thousand little bottles of oil. The crowd daily increased; on some Saturdays above three hundred persons came; on the other days of the week in more limited numbers. But what proves, more than all, that grace is acting, is that every one understands that novenas and applications of oil must be completed by confession and communion. Here," adds M. Dupont, "I stop short in my narration of facts,"—he is writing to an intimate friend—"they have established a sort of pilgrimage in the Rue St. Etienne: '*Infirma mundi, et ignobilia, ea quæ non sunt. . . . elegit Deus.*' The weak things of the world, and base things, and things that are not, hath God chosen.\* I permit myself the liberty of saying to our Lord, 'Why hast Thou chosen the house of the poor pilgrim of the Rue St. Etienne for the

\* 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

performance of such works?’ Alas, so many others will say the same with a shrug of the shoulders !”

The *cultus* of the Holy Face was henceforth to fill M. Dupont’s whole life. From the very commencement he regarded it as the carrying out of the mission entrusted to Sister Saint-Pierre, for she was the first who had given the Adorable Face of Our Lord as the exterior sign and special means of reparation, and he looked upon the miraculous cures effected in his house as manifestations of the will of God with regard to this devotion. And it was not bodily cures alone, but conversions of souls, that came to add their consoling witness. Men who had no religious attractions, nay, even unbelievers, the indifferent, or Protestants with a strong anti-catholic spirit, would enter either from curiosity or induced to seek a cure for some sick relative; and to these the result would often be unexpected blessings; the light of grace would dawn on their own souls, and hence on whole families. M. Dupont thus beheld the glory of God magnified and the good of the Church promoted; and in all this his humble and disinterested soul took unspeakable joy, and he became more and more convinced that it was God’s will to keep him “nailed,” to use his expression, to the picture of the Holy Face. It was sufficient to him to know God’s good pleasure to be ready to impose on himself any sacrifice, and, in fact, two great sacrifices were by this vocation imposed upon him, the deprivation of pilgrimages and the loss of quiet and recollection. To live thus in the midst of a crowd must, indeed, have been a perpetual cross to a man like him. Yet such was the career which opened before him, a career, nevertheless, which the love of God and of his neighbour made him embrace with joy. His was henceforth

to be a life of uniform prayer and reparation, which was to continue until his growing infirmities were to "nail" him to his bed of suffering, there to finish his crucifixion

It would be quite out of the question to give in detail even a selection of the miraculous cures recorded as examples by M. Dupont's historian. In perusing the Lives of holy persons, the reader is not seldom wearied by a repetition of such cases, which must have a more or less general similarity; yet it is necessary to notice some, if only to prove the naturally incurable character of the maladies dealt with, as well as his mode of dealing with them. We know how easily those outside are in the habit of disposing of the awkward frequency of miraculous cures within the one only Church where the realisation of these parting words of our Lord can be met with: "These signs shall follow them that believe."\* Without caring to examine them too closely—we are not now speaking of those who denounce them all as impostures or illusions, but of the more moderate class of religiously-minded Protestants—they will be heard to say that imagination can effect much, particularly in nervous disorders, where there is a lively expectation of benefit; while some will go as far as to allow to prayer made with faith the power of obtaining wonders, failing to notice the fact that such wonders are obtained only in the One Holy Catholic Church, and through faith in means which they repudiate. Passing by, therefore, the whole class of nervous affections, of however long standing, we will limit ourselves to a few instances of another kind, in which the force of imagination could not possibly have any share. Cases of cancer may be

\* St. Mark xvi. 17.

thus adduced, of which there were frequent examples even during the first year of the exposition of the Holy Face in the Rue St. Etienne. Two in particular of a very remarkable kind are mentioned. In the one the sufferer had come to Tours for treatment at the Hospital, and had undergone the painful operation of its excision. After her return home the malady broke out again with increased intensity, as is too common in the case of genuine cancer, and the poor woman was incapacitated for all employment through the excruciating pain she endured. She then sought M. Dupont, who recommended her to make a novena with her husband to the Holy Face. At the end of the nine days the wound had healed up, and she no longer felt the slightest pain. The other case was that of a young person of Chinon who had a cancerous tumour as big as an infant's head. Her life was despaired of, and she was considered to be at the point of death. Some of the oil was obtained, was applied to the lump, and a novena begun. The very next day, the astonished doctor recognised a sensible improvement. She had slept, and the tumour was much diminished. It continued to disappear, and the young girl, being now in a condition to undertake the journey, repaired, as had been promised, to Tours, to pay a visit to the Holy Face. When she entered M. Dupont's room, she was pale, and still suffering. The lump was now, however, only of the size of a nut. After anointing it with the oil and reciting the Litanies of the Holy Face it was gone, and all pain had vanished. The girl burst into tears, and her companions also wept for joy. Her strength had at the same time completely revived, so that she was able to walk about the town before hastening, still on foot, to the Station, in order to take the train back

to Chinon. Sometimes cures were obtained at once previous to unction. In the year 1854 we find a case recorded of a young woman who for six years had been almost stone-blind in consequence of a typhoid fever. Medical skill had been exhausted in vain. Full of faith, she came one day before the Holy Face, and asked for a little of the oil of the lamp with the intention of making a novena. God rewarded the faith of His servant instantaneously, and she returned home glorifying Him for her restored sight.

The Doctor Noyer's cure is worth recording. He was a celebrated Parisian physician. One day he entered M. Dupont's room unexpectedly, with a letter of recommendation from a friend. M. Dupont took it and began to read it aloud. But when he came to one passage he hesitated and stopped. For, in fact, it was stated that the patient could scarcely live three weeks longer, and he who made this confident assertion was a physician also himself. Noyer, guessing the cause of M. Dupont's reluctance to proceed, said, "Do not fear to read on; I know what he says of me—that I am a lost man." "That is true," replied M. Dupont, "but have you faith?" "Yes, assuredly I have." "Well, let us pray together." The Doctor Noyer, whom his colleagues in the profession had condemned, was in the last stage of pulmonary consumption, and had lost altogether one lobe of his lungs, so that they had good grounds for their opinion that he could not live. The two prayed together, and then M. Dupont applied the oil to the afflicted man's chest, who, full of trust, wished to drink some drops of it. He was instantaneously cured. After his return to Paris he kept up a correspondence with his deliverer, was accustomed to recommend patients to him, and yearly made a pilgri-

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of thanksgiving to Tours. Scarcely a day passed, indeed, which did not call for one or more fervent acts of thanksgiving, not to speak of the attestations of graces and cures received from a distance. "I wish," writes M. Dupont to a friend, "you could see the heaps of certificates which arrive. Here we have had to verify the cure of a polypus in the person of Mme. la Marquise de B——'s lady's maid. The physician had declared that it would require three days of successive operations to extract this voluminous polypus. In one night, after an unction of the oil, it had entirely disappeared. Next May (1856) two years will have elapsed without the least trace of it."

Miracles were multiplied far and wide in two ways; by the distribution of little prints of the Holy Face which served to propagate the devotion, and by the sending about bottles of the oil, but this work made large inroads on all M. Dupont's spare time. He had a photograph taken of the fac-simile which he possessed of the Veil of St. Veronica, and engravings made from this he caused to be placed at the head of the fly-leaves of prayers destined for circulation. It would be impossible to say how many of these were sent about at his expense. Twenty-five thousand are mentioned by him as having been lithographed in 1854, and the lithographer assured the Abbé Janvier that the number of these Holy Faces printed subsequently had reached to several hundred thousand. The preparation of the bottles was a serious occupation with M. Dupont. "Would you believe it," he says in 1854, "that, on an approximate calculation, more than sixty thousand of these little bottles have been given before the Holy Face or sent to a distance? Every day we have requests for the oil from all quarters, and every



day we have renewed proofs that this homage paid to the Holy Face is agreeable to our Lord."\* Now was repeated on a much more extensive scale what we have seen the servant of God do for the distribution of the water of La Salette. He prepared and filled the bottles himself. It was curious to see him personally engaged in this minute occupation, sitting at a table in a corner of his *salon*, with a lot of little phials symmetrically arranged before him, and using a small funnel made expressly for the purpose of conveying the oil into them. Then, taking a knife, he would choose and pare the corks, about which he was very particular, lest any of the oil should exude. He often himself sealed and tied the small parcels besides. "These little phials," says M. Dupont's historian, "became the source of conversions and cures, the news of which ravished with joy the servant of the Holy Face." One day, when he had been sending off forty-eight little bottles to M. d'Avrainville for distribution, he warned him to charge each person to keep only one for himself. He was afraid lest any one should lose sight of the exclusively supernatural virtue of the remedy by attaching importance to the quantity used; and so he preferred small bottles, not merely for convenience, but from a motive of faith. "The smaller the better," he said; "I have proved this." When new postal arrangements prevented his transmitting the bottles by post, he would send a print of the Holy Face, after letting a drop of oil fall upon it, and the effect was no less miraculous.

To relate all the miracles which took place in his

\* It has been computed that no less than two million bottles were thus distributed up to the time when fresh arrangements prevented their being sent by post.

own room would, it is said, fill volumes. Even an abridged account would make a book of itself. Such an attempt does not therefore come within the scope of possibility in a work like the present. The comparatively few details to which we shall allude are chiefly for the sake of showing M. Dupont's mode of proceeding, and exhibiting his faith, his simplicity, his perseverance, which would take no denial. Verily, he was what we should call, in human affairs, an impudent beggar, but this sort of impudence is dear to God. A priest, who was one of the vicars of the cathedral at the time, relates how he saw an old woman on crutches, who had been lame for twenty years, come in. This old creature anointed herself with the oil in a small adjoining room, and then came back to the *salon*. There were about twenty-five or thirty people present. They all knelt down, and the Superioress of the Sisters of Charity recited the Litanies of the Holy Face, every one responding. When they were finished, M. Dupont asked the old woman how she found herself. "A little better," she replied. "Have faith," he said; "go on praying, and if you have confidence you will be cured." And, in fact, a quarter of an hour later, the same witness records, the lame woman was completely cured.

One of the higher officials of the railroad saw a lady alight carrying in her arms a sick child, seven years old, which was unable to walk. She asked M. Dupont's address. The agents and station-masters were well used to inquiries of this sort, and were, moreover, so very obliging to the pilgrims of the Rue St. Etienne as willingly to help such as were strangers, and even show them the way when needed. The official in question did so. He accompanied the lady, aiding

her to carry the little boy. On arriving, they all knelt before the Holy Face. M. Dupont examined the child, and asked why he was shoeless. The cause was patent in the swelling and deformity of his feet. "He cannot get his shoes on," said the mother. "Go and buy him a pair," replied M. Dupont, and he gave her a shoemaker's address. She obeyed. Meanwhile the servant of God applied his unctions, and when the mother returned with the shoes there was no difficulty in putting them on; the child was perfectly cured. The railway official, who had witnessed all, related this miracle himself.

Here is another instance of M. Dupont's confidence of obtaining what was sought. A young labouring man came in one day, provided with a recommendation from the mayor of his commune. For two years he had been disabled from working, his right hand being as rigid as a bar of iron, so that he could neither bend nor close it. M. Dupont took it in his, and said, "Oh! oh! this hand must close. Come," he added, "let us all kneel down and pray very much." And, in fact, the prayers and anointings had to be repeated ten times; and it was then only that the grace was obtained. By degrees the stiffness of the hand began to yield. Each time, M. Dupont took it in his to note the progress, and again encouraged all to pray, repeating these words: "This hand must close." And it did close at last. "Never," says a witness, "did I see people pray so fervently." M. Dupont's strong faith had excited that of all present. The witness here mentioned was a very intelligent and pious lady, who had herself been miraculously cured on the spot of a very painful affection of her knee, which was daily getting worse. Brought in a carriage, she was so com-

pletely freed from her malady that, on leaving, she walked about the town for some time without the least sense of fatigue. She repeatedly declared that she would not hesitate to attest publicly, with her hand on the Gospel, all that she had related.

An interesting case was reported by M. Baranger, Dean of Ligueil, in which a striking conversion was the result of what a so-called chance observer witnessed. One day, a stranger of distinguished manners called on this priest and asked him if he knew M. Dupont, to which he replied, "Yes, I certainly do." "He has converted me," resumed the visitor, "and I have come to request you to hear my confession." He then told him how one day, passing through Tours, he observed in a street near the railway some persons gathered round a door and seeking admission. He asked what it was that attracted them. "There is a gentleman there who performs miracles," was the reply. Curiosity induced him to look in. The house, it need not be said, was that of M. Dupont, who, on seeing the gentleman enter, made him a polite bow, inquiring at the same time the object of his visit, upon which he candidly stated his reason, repeating what had been said to him. "Yes, sir," rejoined M. Dupont, "miracles have been worked here—by the goodness of God, and they are worked every day." Observing the marked astonishment of his visitor, he added, "Sir, for a Christian, it is not more difficult to obtain one than it is to have a plate of split peas at the greengrocer's round the corner; you have only to ask; and, if you desire it, you shall be the witness of one. Here is a woman all but quite blind; we are going to pray for her, and I hope she is about to see quite clearly." "I knelt down," said the stranger,

“along with all present, and I, too, began to pray, although for ten years I had not performed a single religious act. The eyes of this blind woman were anointed. She declared at first that she could not read a single word in a book held up to her ; soon after, being again anointed several times with the oil of the Holy Face, she began to see and to distinguish the persons around her ; at last, she recovered her former sight entirely, and began reading fluently out of the book presented to her.” Touched with what he had witnessed, and still more by the words of M. Dupont, his conscience would not allow him to remain as he was, estranged from God ; and so he sought out a priest, as already stated, and made his confession with every mark of sincerity and penitence. His future conduct proved the genuineness of his conversion, for the Dean of Ligueil had the opportunity, for several years at least, of observing that he punctually fulfilled his religious obligations.

In a letter addressed to the present writer, the Right Reverend Abbot Sweeney, O.S.B., gives the following brief account of an interview which he had with the holy man in November, 1866. It is interesting, not only for the particulars it contains, but because the impression produced on his visitor’s mind tallies so exactly with that which is derived from the perusal of his Life. “I was very much edified,” writes this distinguished Benedictine, “by my visit, and greatly struck by the natural, simple conduct of the holy man. He showed me a cupboard full of crutches, sticks, and other helps to infirmity, which had been left by persons who had gone to pray with him crippled, and went away healed. When I broke in upon him, he was reading a commentary on the 79th Psalm : *Qui regis Israel,*

*intende*, which at that time was being sung every day after Vespers in the Cathedral of Tours. He called my attention to the fact of the Holy Face, his favourite object of devotion, being so often mentioned in that Psalm. He had a vessel of oil ever burning before a picture of the Holy Face in his room, and it was with the oil from that vessel that he worked his wonders. When I said it was very astonishing, he properly corrected me, and said it would be very much more astonishing if such prayers were not answered. This I have never forgotten. He showed me on his mantelpiece a pair of spectacles, made for very short sight, and told me they had that morning been left there by a novice from a neighbouring convent, who was about to be sent home owing to her almost complete blindness. However, she obtained leave to go and pray before the Holy Face, and anointed her eyes from the vessel of oil. She felt at once a great change, and thought at first that she was totally blind. But, on taking off her spectacles, she saw perfectly, returned rejoicing to her convent, and left the spectacles behind *in memoriam*.

“He interested me very much by giving me an account of the institution of the perpetual Nocturnal Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in a chapel close to his residence. He had asked the permission of the Archbishop (the present Cardinal Archbishop of Paris), and was refused at first, as Mgr. Guibert feared it would not last. The holy man had great confidence in the Medal of St. Benedict, and always carried a supply about with him. As he was leaving the Palace, he filliped a medal into each window or door that he found open, and left two or three in the garden, praying to St. Benedict to help him in a work so much in

harmony with his own spirit. In the course of an hour or two the Archbishop sent for him, and said he had changed his mind, authorised the institution, and blessed it. It had flourished up to the last time that I had any opportunity of hearing about it."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### SECOND PERIOD OF THE CULTUS OF THE HOLY FACE FROM 1856 to 1860.

AMIDST the splendour of these miracles, and with the the fame of them spreading all around, what were the intimate feelings of him to whom public opinion attributed them? He tells us himself, in a letter written to the Prioress of the Benedictine convent at Arras, to whom, it will be remembered, he was indebted for his portrait of the Holy Face. "When facts occur," he says, "which make people cry out, A miracle! my thoughts naturally revert to you, to Rome, and to God; and I myself remain in that species of confusion which ought to be experienced by those who are popularly regarded as instruments." He would not consider himself even so much as an instrument, and felt bound to take shame to himself for being so regarded. He proceeds, "Our Lord blesses yet more and more persons who undertake novenas in honour of the Holy Face, and who in their inmost heart desire to repair the insults offered to the Holy Name of God." Reparation—that is ever his dominant idea; and it is with this that he connects the miracles



which were operated. He was pressed to keep a register of them, but he replied that it would be very difficult for him to find time to write down the details of all the wonders daily wrought before the Holy Face, and besides, he did not feel that he had a mission for doing this. He contented himself, therefore, with keeping the attestations which came into his hands, and which alone, he observed, were enough to fill a large volume. He would willingly give them up any day to the proper authority, as that would discharge him of all responsibility as their guardian. Perhaps then also attention might be drawn to the writings of Sister Saint-Pierre; they would serve to give a powerful impulse to the movement inclining men's hearts towards reparation.

While tranquilly awaiting this moment, he pertinaciously refused to avail himself of any ordinary method for the furtherance of the work, such as the newspapers might afford, or even to publish a circular, as a friend advised him to do, in order to be relieved of a portion of the overwhelming correspondence to which he condemned himself in order to reply to the numerous inquiries addressed to him. "It is true," he said, "I am overburned by it; but I do not think I am in a position to publish this circular, although it would be of great service to me. It is not suitable that the public should occupy itself with what is going on here. So long as it shall please the good God to make the work of the Holy Face advance in this quiet way, His Providence will leave the 'miserable pilgrim' to do his small part." He had great repugnance to publicity obtained by pamphlets or books. A Priest of the Mission, Superior of the house at Tours at that time, related how a devout layman of

literary distinction came to see him one day, full of admiration for M. Dupont and ardently desirous that, for the glory of God and the good of religion, such prodigies as took place in the Rue St. Etienne should not remain concealed: There were materials, he said, for a most interesting volume, the object of which should be to make this holy man and his great work generally known, and he was willing himself to undertake it. The priest agreed with him that in itself the idea was a good one, but said that it required consideration; ecclesiastical authority in a matter of this kind ought to be consulted; and, first of all, it was needful to ascertain how M. Dupont would stand affected towards it. The proposer thought there could be no doubt but that he would accede to anything which was calculated to promote what he had most at heart, devotion to the Holy Face, and thereupon the priest, who was often in communicaion with M. Dupont, hastened to lay the project before him. Here is his account of what occurred at their interview. “‘I have a piece of good news to tell you,’ I said abruptly. ‘I am acquainted with a distinguished and devout writer, who proposes to compose a book on the subject of what is taking place here before the Holy Face.’ At these words, M. Dupont—I think I see him still, throwing himself back in his chair in a manner that was habitual to him, crossing his arms, and looking up to heaven—said, in a tone of deep displeasure and with an air of magisterial gravity, which I shall never forget, ‘I declare that on the very day I hear that this writer has published a single word with reference to me, I will shut up my house, leave Tours, and never set my foot in it again.’” The narrator observes that it was the

humility of this great Christian, as he could not but admit, which taught him that this would not be the true means of glorifying God.

M. Dupont could not endure that any one should be personally occupied with him, or should suppose that the favours obtained in his house were at all attributable to him. But, do what he would, they *were* attributed to him, and the common people, who are simple and outspoken, took no pains to disguise their conviction. How often would some plain, honest peasants come in, and with the most perfect confidence—confidence, however, of a human sort, trusting in his great wonder-working powers—ask to be cured of their maladies. He would then assume a grave and almost severe air, and say, “Do you take me for a doctor? I am nothing; God is good and all-powerful. Kneel down, and let us pray. If you have faith, you will obtain. Others worse than you have obtained their cure, because they prayed with confidence.” A certain expression of dissatisfaction would still, however, linger on his face, warning them that, if they appeared to appreciate his virtues and rely on the power of his prayers, they were going the wrong way to please him. One of his great methods, in which his success was most striking, was to excite the confidence of the petitioner that his prayer would be heard, and, when it was heard, to attribute the cure altogether to the faith of the suppliant; declaring that if his own prayers had contributed thereto in any degree, it was only in common with those of others present. It can be no matter of surprise that those who were acquainted with the wonders of which he was the daily instrument, were not disposed to acquiesce in this conclusion. After all, did not our Lord Himself

often insist much on the necessity of faith in those who came to beseech Him to heal them? Yet this is in no way opposed to the fact that He worked the miracles of which their faith made them fitting recipients. So also, might it not be that He made use of this "holy man" as His immediate instrument for conferring these supernatural favours, although the faith and prayers of sufferers and their friends had their due share in obtaining them? Such was the general feeling, and it is difficult to see what can be said against it, in spite of M. Dupont's disclaimers.

The letters containing attestations and certificates of cures which he was constantly receiving abounded also in expressions of admiration and gratitude directed to himself, in addition to the thanksgiving rendered to God for the mercies vouchsafed. Notwithstanding, however, this personal laudation, which he would gladly have eliminated, he valued these documents as containing a mass of precious testimony to the glory of the Holy Face, which might prove hereafter of great service, if any inquiry should be instituted by ecclesiastical authority. He was the last man in the world to solicit or provoke such inquiry—that was not his way; but he provided for the eventuality by the careful preservation of all such papers. These rapidly accumulated, and lay in heaps on his shelves and in the drawers of his bureau, and it seemed desirable that they should not be left in this disorder, but that something should be done towards arranging and classifying them and rendering them available for future use. This sort of employment, however, was not congenial to M. Dupont's taste, not to speak of the little time which he had at his disposal for the purpose, but he consented to allow his friend, M. d'Avrainville, who

had acquired an aptitude for classifying documents and drawing up reports in the Bureaux of the Ministry of the Marine, in which he held office, to do this necessary work for him. It was to this trustworthy friend that the holy man bequeathed in his will the charge of the whole collection, that he might place it after his death in the proper hands. It is now in the keeping of the diocesan authority, and it is from this authentic source that M. Dupont's biographer, who was allowed to examine it, extracted most of the details which he gives of miraculous cures.

A few must be selected from this epoch, that is, between the years 1856 and 1860, which we have called the second period of the *cultus* of the Holy Face.

A little girl, ten or eleven years of age, was brought from the Hospital to M. Dupont's house in a most deplorable state. She was crooked and had a hump on her back, which was covered with plasters. After praying for her, it was question of applying the unctions. This M. Dupont never did with his own hands to women or girls, unless the oil was to be applied on the forehead. But in other cases he employed one of the ladies of his acquaintance, or some other woman who happened to be present. Mme. R——, the friend whom he invited on this occasion to perform the office, took the child into the adjoining room, appropriated to this purpose, and was thus able to certify to the woeful state in which she found her. The poor creature had an enormous hump on her back, which had become one frightful wound, covered with plasters and blisters, over which the good lady, not without some natural repugnance, made crosses with the oil. This had to be repeated three times, while the servant

of God redoubled his prayers. He then returned to his writing-desk, and quietly resumed his pen, while Mme. R—— occupied herself with reading. Meanwhile the little girl paced slowly and gravely up and down the room, holding a crucifix and praying fervently. Every time she passed M. Dupont at his bureau, she gently and politely bowed her head. She was a gracious child, very pleasing and intelligent. At last he looked up at her and said, "Is it an illusion of mine? it appears to me that the hump has disappeared. Take her back to the sick-room," he said to Mme. R——, "and undress her." Mme. R—— did as he directed, and no sooner were the clothes removed than plasters, blisters, wrappers, and all fell off at her feet. There was no longer either hump or sore; the child was perfectly whole and straight. They sent for M. Dupont's mother, Mme. d'Arnaud, giving her no intimation of what had occurred. "See this poor little child," they said; "how deformed she is! look at the hump on her back." "Deformed!" replied Mme. d'Arnaud; "she is no more deformed than you or I are." "She was," they rejoined, "a little while ago; but she is so no longer. Our eyes do not deceive us." They were obliged to pin in her clothes as well as they could, for she was so diminished in size that they hung about her in folds.

The length of time which usually elapsed previous to cure varied indefinitely. As for M. Dupont, he had the greatest confidence of obtaining by perseverance what was not granted at once. He would have made novena after novena and applied unction after unction till he got what he wanted, as Jacob wrestled with the angel, saying, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." It was not his fault if some of the appli-

cants went away discouraged from experiencing no amendment. M. Dupont was not the one to give over, and, although it may enter into God's designs not to grant such petitions for His own inscrutable reasons, nevertheless it might have been that M. Dupont's faith and perseverance would have obtained in the end what the sufferers themselves could not be persuaded to hope for. Sometimes, however, a single prayer offered by the servant of God would obtain an instantaneous cure, and that even at a distance. His friend, M. Léon Aubineau, relates how he remembered seeing him one day opening his letters on his return from Mass. He was near the window perusing them, one after the other, keeping himself, however, turned towards the Holy Face, as was his ordinary habit ever since his room had become an oratory. That morning, among his letters, was one from a town in the north. It was concerning a child who was ill, very ill; the parents recommended it to the servant of the Holy Face with great piety and confidence. M. Dupont read their letter, and then, still holding it in his hand, he cast a look on the picture with its lamp lighted before it. "Lord," he said, "Thou seest that time presses." But who could describe the tone expressive of the ardent faith and charity with which he uttered those words? At a hundred leagues' distance, at that very hour, in the twinkling of an eye, the child was marvellously and completely cured. A few days later he was at Tours with his father and mother, kneeling by M. Dupont before the Holy Face and returning thanks to God.

The following miracle was related by M. Dupont to a friend, who retails it in a letter. It exhibits the simplicity with which he regarded such things. "I



had scarcely entered and sat down," writes this gentleman, "when he said to me, with that inimitable tone of sweet joy habitual to him, 'My dear friend, a curious thing has happened here; it is a good story. A short time ago, a lady comes here and asks my permission to pray before the Holy Face, at the same time requesting me to unite with her in prayer to obtain the conversion of her brother, an officer of rank then in garrison in the north. We say some prayers together; she rises, and I speak a few encouraging words to her inviting her to have confidence. I look at her, and a sudden idea strikes me. "Madame," I said, "you have something strange in your eyes"—she squinted; "take a little oil, and anoint them." "Oh, Sir, it is such a trifle, at my age; besides, I have been so all my life." I insist, "It is so simple and good a thing to ask even trifles of God." She consents, and applies the oil once; we pray; and after a second unction and some prayers she rises perfectly cured. We return thanks to God, and behold she is full of confidence, and sure of obtaining the desired conversion. She recommends herself to the prayers of the Adoration; I promise to inscribe it on the register. Well, yesterday morning a letter reaches me. On her return, her brother regarded her with a look of astonishment: "Ah! you have had an operation performed." "No, I have not." "And yet!" Whereupon she related to him in detail all that had taken place. The man was quite astounded; and now she tells me that he has gone to make his confession."

We give the following as a specimen of the way in which M. Dupont would force people, so to say, to be confident of a cure. A priest from Normandy, Curé of an important parish, had been suffering for nine

months from a complete extinction of voice. He could no longer articulate, and the only way in which he was able to hold any communication was by means of a slate. M. Dupont first anointed his throat, then he prayed, and asked for the cure of the sufferer. When he had finished praying, he invited the priest to speak, but he replied in a whisper that he could not venture to do so, for that during the last nine months the least effort he had made to speak aloud had only caused him most acute pain in his throat. But M. Dupont insisted. "You are a priest, Sir," he said; "as for me, I am but a layman; you know better than I do what faith we ought to have, the faith which removes mountains. Try and say, '*Sit Nomen Domini benedictum.*'" Thus exhorted, the good Curé made the attempt, and succeeded. His voice was audible, but resembled that of a ventriloquist. Then the Litanies of the Holy Face and other prayers were recited. He responded to all out loud, and by degrees, as he spoke, his voice became clearer, and resumed its natural tone. "Now sing the *Magnificat*," said M. Dupont; "you can do it." And the priest sang out the *Magnificat* in full sonorous tones. On the following Sunday he preached at High Mass, and related all the particulars of his wonderful cure to his parishioners, who had not heard his voice for the space of sixteen months. He left his slate with M. Dupont in token of gratitude, and for a long time it might be seen on his chimney-piece under a glass frame. At present it is among the *ex-votos* in the oratory of the Holy Face.

Besides the collection of written certificates already mentioned, there was one of another kind, not less valuable in M. Dupont's estimation; the sticks and crutches left by the numerous lame and infirm persons

who had been cured. These trophies might be seen tied up in bundles, in the small room opening at a corner of the *salon*, which was afterwards called the "chamber of miracles." Such unquestionable attestations of the miraculous power which had displayed itself in this holy place were a curious and most interesting spectacle. They were of all descriptions and forms, from the common stick used by the poor man or woman to the artistically contrived and well-padded pair of crutches which had supported the feeble steps of the sufferer in easier circumstances. Lame, gouty, and rheumatic people were continually coming to seek a cure; some painfully dragging themselves along, others, who were quite deprived of the use of their limbs, carried by relatives, friends, or servants. After the prayers the unctions were applied to the disabled or paralysed limbs. The sufferer, who but a moment before was incapable of supporting himself, rises on his feet and joyfully makes the tour of the room, as a trial of strength; he walks and even runs round the garden. Before going, by M. Dupont's advice, to offer his thanksgiving in the different churches of the town, he will deposit his now useless crutch or stick in the chamber of miracles, M. Dupont fastening to it a ticket simply inscribed with a name and a date. "I saw," says Zephyrin, M. Dupont's servant, "a young girl of seventeen brought from the station in a carriage, and carried into Monsieur's *salon* in her father's arms. I saw her cured instantaneously, leave her crutch before the Holy Face, and go back to the railway without needing any support." The same servant related many similar cases which he had witnessed almost daily. He mentions, in particular, that of a poor cripple, living in the neighbourhood of Tours,

who was completely cured, and left his crutch as a testimony.

These memorials were sacred things in M. Dupont's eyes; he had quite a veneration for them, regarding them as so many sensible proofs of the goodness of God. He had a constant eye to their preservation, and was careful to prevent their inscriptions from becoming detached. Occasionally he would have them dusted, and once or twice a year he caused them to be well dried in an oven, to keep them from decay. At the time of the Prussian invasion, when the ambulances at Tours were full of the sick and the wounded, M. Dupont's precious collection of sticks and crutches was remembered, and he was drawn upon for a contribution to the wants of the crippled soldiers. It was a sacrifice, still he made it with his accustomed charity and serenity, but his valuable memorials were thereby considerably diminished, as many of them were never returned; about sixty or seventy, it was computed. The number of these *ex-votos* is now a hundred and forty-six. They may still be seen in the former chamber of miracles, now forming part of the sacristy, and on each side also of the principal altar of the Oratory. Among these sticks and crutches a shabby old umbrella figures. We will trace its history. A young priest, the Abbé Musy, who for four years had suffered from an extinction of voice caused by a complaint in his throat, had made the acquaintance of Mgr. Morlot at Paris on the occasion of his brother's marriage, and was invited to Tours by the Archbishop, who at the same time acquainted him with the miracles of healing that were being wrought at M. Dupont's house. He came, and the result of his visit was an immediate cure. Moved by a feeling

of gratitude, the whole family now repaired to Tours, to return thanks before the Holy Face, having with them the Abbé's mother, who was almost entirely deprived of the use of her limbs. Several other persons joined the pious company, and, among them, a young needlewoman of Paris who was suffering from a terrible cancer. Mme. Musy, if not wholly cured, received notable benefit from the unctions, and after a few minutes could walk easily and without pain. The poor girl with the cancer had six unctions applied to her by one of the ladies present, Mme. Viot-Otter, but so far with no effect. The sufferer returned each time to pray before the Holy Face, the agony being so great that she could only support herself on a little low chair, bent double and, to use M. Janvier's expression, almost rolled up like a ball. At the seventh unction, Mme. Viot came out of the anointing room with a face of triumph, saying that one of the gaping wounds had closed ; there were three in all. A second closed up at the eighth unction, and the last at the ninth. The cure was complete ; and the young girl, like one intoxicated with joy, ran about the room and round the garden over and over again. As yet, however, we have seen nothing of the old umbrella ; its introduction amongst the memorials came about in this wise. The fame of these remarkable cures brought to Tours the wife of M. Malibran, a musician, who was suffering from a throat disease, which interfered with the exercise of her profession. She, too, was cured, and the husband made a pilgrimage on foot to Tours, as he had engaged to do, by way of thanksgiving. On the road, being overtaken by rain, he had purchased an old umbrella from a peasant for the sum of three francs,

and he left it at M. Dupont's house, as a memento before the Holy Face.

In 1856 there was another dreadful inundation of the Loire at Tours, far more disastrous than that of 1846. The holy man had beheld in the earlier catastrophe a divine warning which had been disregarded, reckless gaiety and dissipation continuing without interruption. "Oh!" he had exclaimed, "if only all of us at Tours could profit by this terrible chastisement! But just see—balls and entertainments are being got up in behalf of the victims of the inundation! Is not Satan pitiless? His charity consists in getting people to laugh, and every philanthropist must begin by amusing himself before hastening to the aid of an unfortunate brother." M. Dupont, it will be observed, had no liking for charity balls. "The lying spirit," he says, "would have the world believe that the rich man has charity in his heart, while, in fact, he is luring his rich man by the bait of pleasure, making him think he is doing a good work when, after all, he is but insulting misfortune." In all public disasters M. Dupont saw providential and mysterious events, in which God manifested at once His justice and His mercy. The city was on the brink of utter destruction in 1856. M. Dupont, writing to the Prioress of the Benedictines at Arras, says as much. The good God, however, he added, had not willed to strike, and summon thirty thousand souls to appear thus suddenly before the tribunal of His justice. Replying to her personal inquiries, he writes, "A foot more, and the water would have been in my room, but we were spared;" and then he says that it ceased rising just as, at the urgent request of two good people, he had consented to give a little more elevation to the piece of furniture on which

stood the lamp burning before the Holy Face. What he does not mention, but what we know on the testimony of others to have been his reason for yielding with difficulty to this request, was his perfect faith that the water which was advancing in the Rue St. Etienne would stop at a line he had drawn in his garden for the protection of the Holy Face. And, in point of fact, when the waters reached this point of demarcation they stayed their course. The reader will remember the handful of medals of St. Benedict which he threw into the swelling flood at the very point where the resistance of the dyke eventually saved Tours from complete submersion. M. Dupont's exertions in favour of the sufferers were most devoted. At four o'clock in the morning which followed that dreadful night, he was in a boat carrying succour to those whom the inundation had surprised and isolated in their dwellings, for the faubourgs and neighbouring country were under water. The very next who made his appearance in another boat, bearing help and consolation to these poor people, was the Archbishop himself, Cardinal Morlot. "The successor of St. Martin," says M. Dupont's historian, "and the holy man of Tours thus met upon the same ground, moved by a like inspiration."

M. Dupont had naturally a good and strong, indeed we may say, a robust constitution, but there can be no doubt that air and exercise were most necessary to him. His natural tastes, it will be remembered, inclined him in his youth to field-sports and athletic amusements, and when spiritual were superadded to natural tastes he satisfied both unitedly in his long pilgrimages, his solitary wanderings in woods and fields, and the journeys he made with his daughter. His life, in fact, continued to comprise more or less of bodily activity



until the spread of devotion to the Holy Face made him condemn himself to a species of confinement. He was truly "nailed," as he said, before the Holy Face, and this began to tell on his health, and fostered the malady to which his temperament appears to have disposed him, rheumatic gout. Already, in 1843, we have seen him suffering from premonitory attacks of this complaint and taking the baths at Nérès in consequence, as he did also in the following year. The physicians had insisted, and so he went, but it was against the grain. "I can scarcely find any one here," he writes from the baths, "who will make the agreement with me not to talk of anything except God. Generally people come to the waters only for the doctoring and nursing of the beast; and the wickedest of beasts profits much by this animal state of mind."

In 1859, as his malady was greatly increased in his right hand, which had become very stiff and painful in consequence of his voluminous correspondence, the waters of the Bourbonnais were ordered for him, and he went. Many were surprised that he should not rather have recourse to the unctions of oil and prayers which he so efficaciously employed in the case of those who came to him. It would appear that he did so, in the first instance, for in a letter to a friend he says that he will well understand that, before going to the waters of Bourbon, he had asked our Lord to cure him of the rheumatism which afflicted him, but that, not having obtained his request, which did not the least surprise him, he had turned to natural means, submitting with all his heart to the will of God. Another letter of his testifies to his employment of the oil long before the date of his first visit to Bourbon, for it was written in 1854. "The state of the pilgrim," he says, "has been

exaggerated ; he is not ill, but has simply been put under arrest by lumbago. This was but justice, for he deserved something much worse. The wretched creature,"—he is still speaking of himself—"has applied some oil and performed two or three other devotions, but fruitlessly ; the bread is given to the children." He does not finish the text, but it is evident that in his humility he implies that the remainder is applicable to himself, as one of the little dogs which are happy to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Apparently he received benefit from the waters in 1859, for we find him again at Bourbon in 1860, 1861, and also in 1862, "plunged," as he said, "once more for twenty days in a life more animal than spiritual." But he had scarcely any more respite than at Tours, for his letters followed him.

This was his last visit to Bourbon l'Archambault, where, notwithstanding what he asserted about his "animal life," he left the reputation of a saint. The inhabitants of the place and neighbourhood called him by no other name. "Is the saint here?" they would ask when they took some of their sick to the house where he lodged. A country woman brought her child, a girl of ten or twelve years of age, to him one day, asking him to cure her. She was what is commonly called club-footed. "The good saint in his humility," says his friend, who was no other than the Abbé Janvier, his future historian, present on the occasion, "replied, 'It is not I who can cure your daughter. God alone has that power. Pray to Him with much confidence. Here is some oil from the lamp which burns continually before a representation of the Holy Face of our Lord ; rub your child's foot with it ; meanwhile I will unite my prayers to yours.'" In a few minutes,

to the exceeding joy and amazement of her mother, the child's foot had returned to its proper shape. Unable to contain herself for joy, the little girl went jumping down stairs four steps at a time, while the happy mother was relieved of all anxiety save, as she said, that of purchasing new shoes and stockings for her child. This in its nature was so very striking a miracle that it is impossible to describe the impression which it made on all in the house. "As for our good saint," who had been its instrument, says his friend, "he counted himself as nothing in the matter." But it would have been difficult to persuade any one to take the same view, and no one believed it. This was by no means the only cure which he worked while at the waters, where he lived a life altogether different from that of the other bathers. Every year his reputation had increased and, with it, the veneration in which he was held. From all tokens of singular esteem his humility invariably shrank, and it was perhaps one of the reasons which deterred him from again visiting the place.

In 1860 M. Dupont lost his excellent mother, Mme. d'Arnaud. All who knew her give testimony to the many virtues of this lady, to her fervent piety and extreme delicacy of conscience, which she carried almost to scrupulosity. So fearful was she of wanting in reverence that on the days when she was to communicate she used to rise at three o'clock in the morning in order to be the better prepared. Except to visit churches, she seldom went out, and employed most of her time in working for the poor. Her son's respect and consideration for her were unbounded. He made no domestic arrangement without consulting her, and willingly relied on her for the ordering of the house.

Knowing her sensitive and anxious nature, he was most attentive to avoid everything which could disturb or distress her, not in great things only, but in the smallest. For this reason he was always most punctual at meal times that she might not be kept waiting, and when he came home of an evening, he made a point of presenting himself to her the first thing, lest she should feel any nervous fears about him. His filial piety was shown in the most trifling matters; she loved her son very tenderly, and watched over his material wants and his health with a solicitude which was sometimes excessive; no uncommon case with mothers, involving a manifestation of anxious love which, notwithstanding its source, is not always acceptable to the objects. But M. Dupont never betrayed any annoyance, and, in his own mature and even advancing years, never forgot that she was his mother, and still yielded her all the obedience which was possible for him to pay her. He has been even seen at table, with strangers present, to abstain from some dish which Mme. d'Arnaud thought would disagree with him, upon the slightest observation or sign on her part, and send away his plate untouched. His mother, however, made no attempt to abuse her authority, or step beyond her just maternal province, the care of his health. In everything else she left him quite free and unhampered; nay, she gladly favoured all his charitable works, and often willingly took her share in them.

And so they lived on till 1860, when God called her to Himself. She was then eighty-two years of age, and had up to that time enjoyed very tolerable health. Her illness was short, and her end exceedingly tranquil. "My worthy mother," writes M.

Dupont, "has had the most peaceful death you could imagine. The duty devolved upon me of telling her that she was nearing eternity: this was at two o'clock in the morning. 'I believe,' she replied, 'that I am about to die soon. Well, I am not afraid; I am not afraid.' This was much as coming from her, since throughout her life my mother had the liveliest impression of the judgments of God." She appeared, indeed, as her son afterwards testified, to have possessed in a high degree the gift of the fear of God, to which she had generously corresponded. And now when she was dying, she had a smile on her face, and her lips uttered fervent prayers and aspirations betokening the charity which filled her heart. As her pulse was every moment sinking, her son had the courage to tell her that he thought the agony of death was near. Again gently smiling, she said, "You think I am about to enter into my agony;" then, raising her hands, she said aloud, "Jesus, my Saviour, come!" Her agony lasted but one minute. "I had only time," says M. Dupont, "to place her hand on my forehead to receive her last blessing; on withdrawing it, that I might kiss it, I saw that her eyes had closed naturally, and it was literally true that she had sunk into a sweet sleep."

Nothing can be more touching and beautiful than M. Dupont's letters to his friends at this time filled with the memory of his mother, but that memory was replete with consolation. He acknowledged that she was ever in his mind, but the thought caused him no distractions when obliged to give his attention to business. "Death," he said, "came to her in so sweet a manner that my heart cannot detach itself from that blessed parting scene." At the death of his mother

M. Dupont was in the 63d year of his age, and in the eleventh of his special devotion to the Holy Face. She had, to the close of her life, kept house for him, and been to him a cheerful and loving companion, making his house still a home. She was the last family tie which connected him with this world, and, when he had lost her, his detachment from earth was completed. Henceforth he was to devote himself exclusively to the work which seemed to be his providential calling—the service and worship of the Holy Face.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### M. DUPONT'S KINDNESS AND LOVE OF HIS FRIENDS.

WE will pause awhile at this stage of M. Dupont's life and dwell for a brief space on one of his distinguishing virtues, his kindness. It may be asked whether by the term kindness, charity is intended. Not precisely, although kindness when animated by a supernatural motive—and it may be safely said that all this good man's virtues were thus sublimated—is a branch of charity. Yet kindness is not exactly synonymous with charity. For a man may have divine charity, that is, he may not only be in the grace of God, but be sincerely solicitous to live a good life, and may be classed even amongst the devout, and yet be deficient in kindness. Father Faber, who puts things strongly but always makes sure of his ground, has these remarkable words on this subject: "Devout people are as a class the least kind of all classes. This

is a scandalous thing to say ; but the scandal of the fact is so much greater than the scandal of acknowledging it, that I will brave this last for the sake of a greater good. Religious people are an unkindly lot. Poor human nature cannot do everything ; and kindness is too often left uncultivated, because men do not sufficiently understand its value. Men may be charitable, yet not kind ; merciful, yet not kind ; self-denying, yet not kind. If they would add a little common kindness to their uncommon graces, they would convert ten where they only abate the prejudices of one. There is a sort of spiritual selfishness in devotion, which is rather to be regretted than condemned. I should not like to think it is unavoidable. Certainly its interference with kindness is not unavoidable. . . . Kindness as a grace is not sufficiently cultivated.” \*

Léon Dupont was by nature kind, and much more so by grace. Even as a natural quality and a very human one, which the etymology of the term itself proves, being derived from the feeling springing out of our sense of a common nature, it ought never to be undervalued. “The secret impulse”—we again quote Father Faber—“out of which kindness acts is an instinct which is the noblest part of ourselves, the most undoubted remnant of the image of God, which was given us at the first. We must therefore never think of kindness as being a common growth of our nature, common in the sense of being of little value. It is the nobility of man.” † Might we not therefore say that, while the most truly human of all the natural virtues, it is at the same time the most godlike of them ? It has been observed that in M. Dupont the

\* *Spiritual Conferences*, p. 17.

† *Ib.*, p. 4.



supernatural did not obscure the natural. You seemed to discern the native character through the bright superstructure of grace which surmounted it, as through a transparent medium, and no one can have read thus far without observing what may be called the indigenous good-nature which flourished in the generous soil of his heart, the good-nature of the unselfish and the brave. That good-nature, it is true, was now always exalted by supernatural motives, but with all that difference—and how great is the difference, as wide as that which separates earth from heaven—it was still in one sense the same ; possessing that human charm which wins all hearts alike.

The following practice of his may serve as an instance of this kindness and good-nature. When returning home late in the evening through the streets he would be on the watch for any stray individuals who had lost their way or were belated, whether children, workmen, or strangers ; sometimes soldiers, whose recall had sounded, but who, being the worse for drink, were either not attending to it or were staggering along very slowly. He was greatly puzzled one evening what to do with a poor fellow of this sort, whom he lighted upon a good way off from his barracks. He first lectured him, and strove to persuade him to return as fast as he could in order not to incur the regulation punishment, but the tipsy man resisted every solicitation. So then he tried the effect of a little harmless bribery, and gave him two francs to induce him to move on, but this only made matters worse, for the besotted soldier, delighted at having a piece of money in hand, insisted on going forthwith into a neighbouring tavern to “treat his benefactor,” as he said. M. Dupont, now fairly baffled at all

points, bethought him of calling in the aid of a friend who lived close by. This was an old officer who, knowing how to deal with a fellow-soldier in such plight, succeeded at last in getting the stupefied man to take the road to his barracks. M. Dupont begged his friend not to lose sight of him, but to follow and see that he really did return, and then speak a word for him to his commanding officer. Not satisfied, however, with this precaution, he went himself next morning to the barracks to ascertain how it had fared with his protégé, and was delighted to find that only a slight punishment had been inflicted on the delinquent. The result was that the soldier, who had not been sufficiently drunk to forget what had occurred, touched with the kindness of which he had so undeservedly been the object, corrected himself of his fault and became a good Christian. Such was the persuasive eloquence of simple kindness.

There was something besides which imparted much persuasiveness to M. Dupont's kindness, and that was his geniality; but this is a feature of kindness, and we may hazard the opinion that it is usually more prominent in men than in women. Whatever charms kindness may possess in the latter—and assuredly in them, too, it has its peculiar charms—it is in men especially that this frank and open geniality is to be found; perhaps it harmonises better with the bold manly character. Be this as it may, geniality has a wonderfully winning and even taming influence. Let us listen once more to Father Faber. "A kind-worded man is a genial man, and geniality is power. Nothing sets wrong right as soon as geniality."\* There was ample experience of this in M. Dupont's case. His

\* *Spiritual Conferences*, p. 42.

geniality was quite irresistible both in attracting and in attaching. It flowed from his heart, and pervaded his whole behaviour in his intercourse with all classes. There is no quality which recommends a man more truly to his inferiors. Small as is their appreciation of condescension, however well meant, great in proportion is their love of what is hearty. It establishes that equality which alone they crave, for, when not perverted by false doctrine, they do not grudge to their superiors the respect which is their due; it is the treating them like fellow-creatures which they value, and to which they secretly feel they have a claim. Geniality is also a close cement in friendship. It makes a man, as it were, sure of his friend, and thus secures and opens his own heart. M. Dupont's relatives and friends might well feel sure of him. His engrossing occupation as the servant of the Holy Face had not the least effect in slackening his warm regard for them, neither did the death of his mother, his last close family tie, make any difference. His house, as ever, was open to them. They might come and spend days, nay, even weeks, with him, for hospitality was a virtue he highly prized, and of which he lamented the loss "in ages of corruption and religious ignorance." Too much engaged now to pay many visits himself, he still welcomed with the same cordiality those who visited him. And what a welcome it was! His historian, speaking of his reception of friends on special occasions, such as New Year's Day or other festal anniversary, describes it as a "veritable explosion of joy." True, he never disarranged his way of living or altered the style of his conversation for the sake of any of his kindred or friends who might be staying in his house, but that was, perhaps, one special reason

why their presence did not disturb him at all. It is the sense of constraint which makes the duties of hospitality not seldom burdensome in the long run, but M. Dupont never experienced a sense of constraint unless debarred from talking about God, and in such a case he found relief by taking himself off as soon as he could. Those who came to stay under his roof knew what they had to expect, and, if they did not like it, they were free to go, as they had been free to come. At a period when he had more leisure, he frequently went with his mother and daughter to visit his relatives in their country houses, and, when he could no longer spare time for this, his house was at their disposal, whether he were at home or absent.

All his cousins loved him dearly. One of them relates a remarkable instance of the "taming power" to which we have alluded. In this case, however, it is impossible not to see that the influence had in it something more than natural. Léon, she said, had often told her how a woman of bad life, whose tongue was being eaten away by cancer, was cured and converted by the prayers of a good Carmelite nun, who continually repeated on her behalf the invocation, "Jesus, be to me Jesus." These words her cousin enclosed in a pretty little bag to be hung round the neck of a little boy of hers, who not only had been ill for several months, but was possessed by a morbid dislike to seeing any one. "I had forbidden Léon," says this lady, "to go up to my room, for we were expecting that day a very serious attack of fever. But Léon persisted in going, and I, who did not stand on any ceremony with him, remember saying to him, 'How obstinate you are!' I hurried on before him, and took Raoul on my lap. Léon followed, crossed the room, and went to sit at

the opposite end. 'Come, then,' he said to Raoul. I expected piercing cries; instead of which, Raoul hastened to him, and climbed up on his knee. (Raoul, it must be observed, had never seen him, and knew nothing of him.) Léon caressed him, and then hung the little bag round his neck. Returning down stairs, he said to all our family who were gathered there, 'Raoul is cured, we are going to recite the prayer; there is nothing more to fear.' And cured, in fact, he was; the large doses of quinine that the poor child had been taking were discontinued, his health was restored, and he grew fat and strong to the joy of all."

While we are on the subject of this peculiar influence exercised by M. Dupont, we may mention an instance which occurred when he was at Bourbon l'Archambault. There was in the neighbourhood a wretched deformed creature, of the most repulsive appearance and the most unamiable of tempers. Every one avoided him, and his poor mother was the only person who, with the greatest trouble, was able at times to pacify him. Being universally disliked, he manifested his resentment by a habitual animosity against all who came in his way. His name was Rollin. M. Dupont, hearing of his miserable condition, asked to see him, and, by his persevering and cordial kindness, succeeded little by little in softening his untamed and savage nature. The holy man always saw some good in every one—that is, indeed, a property of kindness—and knew how to draw it out; and so he would tell everybody that Rollin was a friend of his, and that he took great pleasure in seeing and talking to him. The poor unloved and unloving creature began to be quite proud of his one friend; the sun at

last had shone upon his heart and opened it. By degrees it gave access to religious influences, and after a while, following the advice of his benefactor, Rollin reconciled himself with God and with his neighbours, and lived and died a good Christian.

To the love of his kindred, M. Dupont joined an ever-affectionate remembrance of his birth-place, the island of Martinique. He took a lively interest in all its concerns, not only religious, but even political and commercial, so that he would talk of colonial affairs and the agricultural produce of the island when he met well-informed and competent persons connected with it; and this was about the only digression to purely secular matters he was ever heard to make. Indeed, he always spoke with pleasure of the colony, extolling its rich products and the fertility of its soil. There was nothing to compare, he used to say, to the Martinique rum, and, when he had friends at his table, would engage them to make the experiment. The disasters of the island moved him deeply, and he was amongst the first to send assistance, and foremost in promoting subscriptions for the sufferers. He did not, it may well be surmised, leave his countrymen strangers to his devotion to the Holy Face, or to the blessings flowing from its worship. Bottles of the oil were sent by him to the island, and on more than one occasion with results accounted to be miraculous.

He was full of those delicate attentions and obliging acts which kindness and affection prompt, and, in spite of his engrossing occupations, not one of his friends had ever cause to complain of being forgotten or neglected. He was quite ingenious in devising ways of being useful to them or giving them pleasure in trifling things. Thus, he writes to M. d'Avrainville

begging him to purchase for him a pair of razors from a person famous for their manufacture, his object being to give them a personal trial before ordering another pair, with a razor strop, to present to Dom Guéranger the first time that famous Benedictine should visit Tours. And here it may be observed that he had invented a method of sharpening his razors, which he found very successful. It was by means of small pieces of white wood, smoothed and well polished ; these he prepared with his own hands for presents to his friends. It may surprise the reader, who has hitherto been acquainted with the "holy man" only in the capacity of a physician employing supernatural remedies, to find him playing the very secondary part of an amateur doctor, availing himself of merely natural methods of healing. He had invented what he called his sulphurous cupping-glasses, which he would apply to his sick friends whenever he could obtain the consent of their doctor. We may call the apparatus his invention, because the unusual size of the glasses and the application of sulphur were a device of his own. The offer was made with such hearty kindness and good-will, and he had such evident pleasure in doing the thing, that it would have been difficult to refuse, for fear of causing him pain.

It will be remembered how he would stuff his pockets with sweet things for his friends' children or dainty morsels for the poor, which was something over and above charity, as his only object was to give pleasure. It may be safely said that there was not one of his friends who had not heard him speak of his famous haricot beans, or had not either tasted them at his table, or received a present of them from him. Whatever the cause, whether it were some secret art, known only to himself, certain it is that nowhere in



Touraine were such beans to be had, of so fine a flavour and so luxuriant a growth. They came originally from Nice, and he had taken great pains to procure them of the choicest quality. Some he sowed in his own garden, the rest he distributed among the different religious communities of the town. He bestowed considerable attention on their cultivation, and the result was quite surprising. It was a sight worth seeing, those rows of flourishing plants, loaded at once with flowers and produce, both green and dry, in marvellous profusion. The greater part of the crop was destined for the Little Sisters of the Poor, by whose old men and women they were greatly relished.

He had a great many god-children, for he never refused to take the office of sponsor on himself, and yet with him it was no sinecure, since he made it a point of conscience to attend to the spiritual interests of all, numerous as they were ; and, if any were deprived of parental care by reason either of death or absence, he would act as guardian and father to them, often receiving them under his roof for weeks or even months together, and aiding them in their necessities. Nay, he would send sums of money, amounting sometimes to several hundred francs, to such of them as were living at a distance, and whom he knew to be in need. He reckoned up forty god-children of all classes, and, if mention were made of any of them, he would say, "That is one of my forty." He felt a particular pleasure in standing sponsor for converts from Protestantism and Judaism ; and in one of his letters he speaks with enthusiasm of the last moments of "a dear soul" who had been reconciled to the Church twelve years before, and who kept repeating in touching accents of joy, "I am a Catholic ! I am a Catholic !"

Many of his god-children who survive have retained an ineffaceable remembrance of his wise counsels and his frequent acts of kindness towards them. It was the same with his servants, who were most tenderly attached to him ; above all, the faithful Adèle, who had accompanied him from Martinique, and who related after his death—she has now herself followed him—how once in a serious illness M. Dupont nursed her as a father or a brother might have done.

It would be difficult to give an idea of his gentleness to the sick and infirm who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Face. A servant in one of the religious houses was suffering from a disorder in the throat which made it difficult for her either to eat or speak. Full of confidence in M. Dupont, with whom she was acquainted, she came, just as he was leaving his house, and, pulling him smartly by the sleeve, she said in a faint whisper, “I was going to your house, Sir, for you to cure me.” He immediately turns back, puts a few questions to her, and asks her whether she would have the courage to drink some of the oil burning before the Holy Face. She replies that she would willingly do anything he wished, and swallows a few drops of the oil which the servant of God offers her. They then began to say the Litanies, when the pain in her throat entirely ceased, and the more she tried to make the responses the stronger her voice became. “Now you must eat,” he said ; and he gave her some food, which she was able to take with the greatest ease. Finding, however, that she was not quite cured, he told her that she required a more nourishing diet, adding kindly, “Come here, and we will take care of you ;” and, in fact, she stayed in his house a month. “His mother,” she says, “lavished every attention upon me,

and gave me delicate messes ; I shall never forget it as long as I live. I have remained quite well for more than twenty years." To every one he was all kindness and compassion, but to the poor especially, as needing it most, he overflowed with benevolence. They all regarded him as a saint. He was full of generosity in his dealings with working-men, gave them his kindly sympathy and aid when they were in any trouble, and took much pleasure in preparing for those whom he knew pleasant surprises in the shape of what we should call a "treat" at the conclusion of some work in which they had been engaged. Thus, when the provisional chapel of St. Martin was finished, he invited the workmen, some twenty in number, to assist at a Mass which he caused to be said for them ; after which he gave them an excellent breakfast. On such occasions he exhibited that delicate tact and respect for his fellow-creatures which was so remarkable in him. He provided liberally for his guests, but he made no show of his liberality, observing a quiet and modest demeanour, which, while it detracted nothing from his native dignity, put the men at their ease, and made them regard him in the light, not so much of a patron, as of a superior friend.

It need scarcely be said that ever since grace had touched his heart, the kindness which had always flowed from it, and which continued to flow still more abundantly, was always animated by supernatural motives, so that, even when he sought only to give pleasure to a fellow-creature, it was in a nearer or more remote subserviency to a higher aim. The recipients of his kindly benefits knew this well, but they loved him none the less, and were none the less grateful, because, while procuring for them an earthly gratifi-

cation, they were aware that he coupled therewith a desire for their eternal bliss ; and, in point of fact, the workmen, as a body, were devoted to him, and among them individuals might be found who, as the Abbé Janvier declares, would have allowed themselves to be cut in pieces for him, and would have denied him nothing that he could possibly have asked of them.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE THIRD PERIOD OF THE CULTUS OF THE HOLY FACE FROM 1860 TO 1870.

FROM 1860 to 1870 M. Dupont's life may be said to have been wholly spent before the Holy Face. Prayer, the reception of the sick, and his correspondence absorbed it all. In several respects it was a kind of self-immolation, opposed as such an existence was to his natural temperament and active habits, while it was extremely detrimental to his health, which began to fail. He saw this, he felt it, and resigned himself to it. God rewarded him by a great increase of secret grace, which raised his soul to an eminent degree of perfection, and by that abundance of miracles in which he was the active co-operator, not to say the direct instrument. When any accidental cause, such as public rejoicings or a great fair, attracted a more than usual number of people to Tours, the crowd of pilgrims or simple visitors at his house would be enormous. His letters bear witness to the overwhelming burden laid upon him. "You will find me aged," he writes to a friend, "but God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

As for me, I can hardly keep up with my correspondence. I live in a very hailstorm of business from morning till night, and this renders the smallest undertaking calling for order or punctuality quite impracticable to me. You cannot imagine, my dear friend, the nature and number of my occupations resulting from the devotion to the Holy Face." To others he writes in the same strain, but rejoices with them at the miracles of which he is the daily witness. "You are not mistaken," he writes to one, "in thinking that I have a heavy correspondence thrown upon me. Every day it goes on increasing, because our Lord does not cease to reward the faith of those who place their confidence in His Holy Face. Would you believe that I have received since the 1st of January"—he was writing on April 11th, 1863—"fifty-two certificates of favours obtained through anointings with the oil? During this time the minimum of letters daily received has been eight." We have seen that they very commonly amounted to fifteen or sixteen, and it must be remembered that he made a practice of answering every letter at once.

The result of all this was to tether him to his post. He had to renounce all his pilgrimages, dear as this devotion had been to him for years. His correspondence alone, which he could not suffer to accumulate even for a few days, would have rendered this sacrifice necessary. In answer to a letter pressing him to go to Paray-le-Monial—pressing, indeed, he would not have needed had he been free—he writes, "To this deprivation I say *Fiat*, and that from my heart, in expiation of the little fruit which I have derived from the different pilgrimages which I was enabled to make when I was at liberty to undertake them, and at an age when other feelings may possibly mingle

with one's good-will to serve God." He means, no doubt, that natural liking and human eagerness which is apt to accompany active works of zeal, and detracts from their merit and spiritual profit. But this sedentary life helped to develop in him, as we have said, the malady which the baths of Nérès and Bourbon had checked but had not eradicated. He suffered from very painful attacks of gout and of rheumatism in the joints, which began to affect seriously the use of his limbs, but in his growing infirmities he thought he read a proof that God willed to keep him more closely than ever before the Holy Face. This choice of God for him he made his own by voluntary acceptance, so that he could truly say with the Psalmist, "*Hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam.*" \*

Seated at his bureau writing, or kneeling at the corner of the mantelpiece, with his eyes and face turned towards the venerated picture, he prayed, ready at any moment to receive all who presented themselves. And many, indeed, they were at this period. Their numbers were so great that the approach to his house would be crowded with all sorts of vehicles, and the very porch and door-way encumbered with the traveling-bags of visitors and pilgrims. A friend of his relates how one day, when on his road to the railway station, just as a train was coming in, he saw one of those *commissionaires* who are not admitted to the platform, in order to prevent them from teasing the passengers on arriving, bawling out with all his might, while holding his hands on each side of his face to make his voice carry further, "Any one for M. Dupont's?" and, as the distance was very short from the station to the Rue St. Etienne, these men would sometimes

\*Here will I dwell, for I have chosen her.—Psalm cxxxi. 14.

deceive the pilgrims by taking them a long way round, in order to raise the fare. One of M. Dupont's clients discovered to his surprise, when it was question of returning to the station, that it would take him only five minutes, whereas on his arrival he had been driven about for an hour under the charge of one of these men.

Among those who were cured, the number of whom was marvellously great, there were not a few, speaking absolutely not relatively, who relapsed after a time. But whether or no the cure was permanent, a much more precious grace was almost invariably the fruit of an interview with the holy man, for his visitors left him greatly edified, carrying away an enduring recollection of him, which seemed like a salutary medicine to their souls. One young lady, although she had been apparently cured and remained so for a year and a half, yet, on her relapsing into a state even worse than the first, strange to say, never felt her confidence revive, so as to seek a second cure ; but when she desired later to see M. Dupont again, it was, as she said, rather in order to edify herself with the sight of a saint than to obtain a second restoration to health, which, however, she had vainly sought by other means. She thus describes the holy man : " My recollection of M. Dupont has always been as that of a saint. I was in my sixteenth year, and my failing health caused my family much anxiety. I went to Tours with my mother and sister, and we introduced ourselves to M. Dupont. He began by asking me whether we had been to confession, and on our replying that it was not long ago, he rejoined, ' No matter ; you must go to confession and communion if you desire to obtain anything.' As we knew no one in Tours, he was so good as to recommend us a confessor.



All who have known him will be able to say with me how completely his exterior bore the appearance of a man wholly dead to himself, and living only for the love of God and his neighbour. It required great abnegation to pass his life thus in the service of others, and those often persons unknown to him ; never to weary of receiving, exhorting, praying with them, and ever with an unfailing sweetness and serenity. With what piety and recollection did he not say those prayers which he was ever beginning again and again ! He always recited them on his knees, and he wished others to imitate him in this, in spite of the fatigue it might occasion them. When necessary, he would even repeat them several times over for each person. And, with all this, not a word did he utter which drew attention to himself ; he seemed to have abdicated his personality, and to live no longer save for the service of his Divine Master."

When sick persons went away without being cured M. Dupont sought to discover the reason, for, although not surprised at the failure—nothing ever surprised him—he habitually looked with confidence to a successful result. If he could have been surprised at either event, certainly it would not have been at the miracle, but rather at its absence. He usually traced the disappointment to want of faith in the petitioners. This mistrust he recognised by certain signs which none but he would have observed, and which he indicated with much simplicity. Two ladies on their way to the waters presented themselves, but did not obtain their cure. "In general," he observed, "it is rather on returning from the waters than when going to them that graces are obtained. See the woman in the Gospel: '*In medicos erogaverat omnem substantiam*

*suam*—she had bestowed all her substance on physicians.’” \* These ladies had not come despairing of earthly help and casting themselves solely on God; on the contrary, they had by no means relinquished their confidence in medical treatment, and only, so to say, made a tentative experiment of supernatural means in passing. This was not a state of mind calculated to elicit strong faith. Of course M. Dupont recognised that there were cases in which it did not enter into God’s designs to grant a cure, and this especially in that of singularly holy persons, some of whom came to solicit this favour, yet without obtaining it. So it was with the saintly Mgr. de Ségur, who, at the commencement of his loss of sight, had recourse to the Holy Face. His blindness was to become total, and never to be removed, nor did he himself desire its removal. A priest of Tours, who saw him at M. Dupont’s in the year 1866, relates how he heard him say, “I asked the Holy Father’s permission to have the Blessed Sacrament in my house.” Pius IX. consented, but with this restriction—only for so long as his blindness should continue. “If it be so,” was the reply of this great adorer of Jesus in the Sacrament of His Love, “I will beg the good God that I may never recover my sight.”

Some sick persons, on the other hand, had only to write a despatch or telegram, and what they wanted was granted at once. M. Dupont seemed, generally speaking, not to be very hopeful of those who made the seeking of a cure a formal piece of business. He preferred the “only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.” † A sick person proposed coming to Tours for a fortnight with the view of applying the

\* St. Luke v. 43.

† St. Matthew viii. 8.

unctions every day before the Holy Face. M. Dupont saw in this intention a symptom of mistrust. While always encouraging perseverance in a request, when not immediately granted,—no one more than he,—he did not like any studied preparation. Belief was with him a simple affair, and so was a miracle. The turning the matter into a great transaction was to run the risk of not obtaining a cure, and so he advised the sufferer to follow the example of many others who were contented to remain for a day or two. He knew but one person who had not been the worse for a contrary course. If the applicant was no better the first day he would not be disheartened, but if on the second day he experienced no sensible improvement, while he saw others obtaining the favours they asked, he would begin to feel as if he were not intended to receive the boon to gain which he had planned a long course of devotion. Such at least was his experience, and he had certainly ample opportunity for forming a judgment. It was the same feeling which, as we have seen, made him dislike too much importance being attached to the quantity of oil employed. It often happened, however, that persons who had experienced no alleviation of their maladies, after a prolonged stay at Tours, received so much edification from what they had witnessed that they became the most zealous apostles of the worship of the Holy Face.

M. Dupont's great method was to raise the confidence of the petitioners by degrees, and to encourage in them, and communicate to them, that faith in the power of prayer which makes it, as it were, omnipotent. Here is an instance in point. A young girl from the parish of Notre-Dame-la-Riche was suffering much from an injury to one of her feet, which had been crushed ; the

swelling was enormous. As she was unable to walk, she had herself carried and placed before the Holy Face. All began to pray, and the young lady herself thus expressed her request aloud: "My God, if it is Thy good pleasure and Thy will, I pray Thee grant me my cure." To most persons this would have appeared to be a very good and proper prayer; but M. Dupont, who overheard it, was not satisfied, and gently found fault with her. "That is not the way to pray," he said; "you have not got faith. Say straightforwardly to God, 'Lord, cure me.' If you want to be cured, you must command the good God." "Oh, that is too much!" exclaimed the poor girl; "I cannot command God." "Ah! you have not got faith," repeated M. Dupont; "you must say, 'I want to be cured! Cure me!'" When we pray we must have a boundless confidence, and never hesitate." "And yet," said the poor girl, "it does seem to me that I have faith." Then, exciting herself to a fresh effort, she began to pray again; after which she experienced a certain improvement, and was able to walk home, although with difficulty. Encouraged by this amendment and reproaching herself for the weakness of her faith, she said, "My God, it is true I have too much doubted Thy power and goodness towards me. I see it, I know it. Thou canst and Thou wilt heal me. I ask this favour of Thee; grant it to me, O Lord, grant it to me." She went again to M. Dupont, and returned completely cured. Thus did the man of God succeed in raising this young girl's faith to the level of his own—that undoubting faith to which our Lord gave the promise of obtaining whatsoever we should ask.

Sometimes cures were granted apparently without the concurrence of the sufferers themselves, in answer

to the supplications of friends and relatives. In the case of infants it was necessarily so, but an instance is recorded of a favour granted to a man of advanced age, who from the state to which he was reduced had seemingly something of the unconsciousness of a child ; so that, if his own prayers did not accompany those of his friends, he at least offered no obstacle to the manifestation of God's goodness. The gentleman who witnessed the cure and related it to the Abbé Janvier was a fervent Christian, gifted with much intelligence, who was on a visit at the time to a brother of his own, one of the canons of the cathedral. As he was conversing with M. Dupont, an old man from the neighbourhood of Loches was carried in by his wife and children, friends assisting. He lay like a log in their arms, being perfectly powerless in all his members. He was placed in an arm-chair, and the usual prayers commenced. All of a sudden, while they were being recited, all present kneeling, the old man appeared to awake, as it were, out of a deep slumber, looked round inquiringly at his wife, children, and friends, and then said, in a good strong voice, "What's all this about? what's going on here?" Then, getting briskly out of his arm-chair, where he had hitherto remained motionless, standing erect, and drawing himself up to his full height, he said, "I don't want anything now; I can walk by myself. Come along, let us go." And, in fact, to the astonishment of all present, the narrator included, he was perfectly cured, and walked away actively, leaning on no one.

The number of certificates of cure, great as it was, by no means represented the number of cures operated, which between the years 1860 and 1870 was prodigious. Desirous as he was to obtain these certificates,

there were not a few which, when obtained, M. Dupont never added to his collection; and these were attestations of some of the most remarkable of the miracles. His humility shrank from the frequent mention of his own personal share in them, which, as we well know, he always endeavoured to make the least of, and indeed, obliterate as much as he could. Not to mention these deficiencies, numbers of sufferers came and went away cured, like the old man from Loches, with whom it was no question of certificates. Other cases, again, there were, in which certificates ought to have been sent, and were not, persons being miraculously healed who, like the nine lepers, did not return to give glory to God. There were cases of severe relapse into ill health in consequence of this ingratitude, followed, however, by a second recovery when the neglect was repaired. So it was in a village near Angers, where a person in the last stage of consumption, and given up by the doctors, was instantaneously cured. Soon after, she fell ill of another complaint. M. Dupont was not surprised. "So long," he said, "as she has not satisfied the duty of gratitude by sending a certificate she will not recover." Yet five-and-twenty years were allowed to elapse without her sending this attestation. At last it was sent, in the hopes of obtaining another cure, and the Abbé Janvier relates how he had recently seen the individual herself, who was restored to almost perfect health, and had come to return thanks to the Holy Face. This was after M. Dupont had gone to his reward.

We shall content ourselves with specifying one more miraculous cure out of the many, equally extraordinary, which we might relate, but for which space would fail us. We select it, partly because it can be told in a few

words, and also because it belongs to the class of surgical cases, which are peculiarly convincing, inasmuch as organic injury can never be repaired, still less instantaneously, save by a supernatural power. The case was attested by a Curé in the department of the Orne, who attended the sufferer from the moment of his accident. A young man was dashed against a wall by a runaway horse. His skull was fractured, and he vomited blood for forty-eight hours. The case being hopeless and death imminent, the Curé administered him and gave him communion, which, he says, he received with evident faith. "Two hours after midnight," the Curé adds—he is writing to M. Dupont—"I performed an unction with your oil. At nine o'clock the holy Mass was celebrated, and communions were offered for his intention. Wonderful to relate, the bones which were fractured to such a degree as to present to the touch points like those of needles, again united. At four o'clock in the evening, he was eating a cutlet and reading an account of his sad accident in the newspapers." The youth was a pupil at Saint-Cyr, and was on the point of going through his examination, which was to take place the next day but one. He never felt any ill effects from the frightful, and apparently fatal, injury he had received.

We have said that the period between 1860 and 1870 was that of the greatest concourse of visitors to the Holy Face; and so it was, speaking generally, but at times, and especially towards the close of that period, it underwent a sensible diminution, which M. Dupont does not fail to notice in his correspondence. Several reasons may be assigned for this decrease. In the long run the attraction resulting from novelty is pretty sure to slacken; people became accustomed to what was



taking place in M. Dupont's house, and ceased to pay much attention to it, and consequently fewer persons came from mere curiosity, as they did at first; the visitors being simply pilgrims and the sick. Even the latter were often contented to send for some of the oil, which was known to effect cures at a distance, and thus save themselves the fatigue and discomfort of a journey. But, whatever may have been the operation of second causes, we cannot but see in this diminution of an oppressive throng of visitors a providential dispensation; God, in His mercy, allowing His old servant some of the rest for which his increasing infirmities imperatively called. M. Dupont was neither grieved nor surprised at this falling off; he could even in a measure rejoice that he was less besieged by people who felt themselves obliged to lavish praises upon him which were a continual pain to his humility. As regarded the glory of God and the good of souls, the confidential letters and certificates which he continued to receive proved to him that God was working, if in a more secret, yet in a no less efficacious manner.

Moreover, he felt himself amply compensated by the multiplication of pilgrimages to Lourdes, which were beginning to assume increased proportions, and by the striking cures obtained in its miraculous waters. In this, indeed, he recognised one of the principal causes of the diminished resort to his little oratory; it was, he believed, the Adorable Face of our Lord which was impelling souls towards the Immaculate Virgin of Lourdes in order that they might receive from her still more abundant graces. M. Dupont did not himself go to Lourdes. His ill health forbade him, as well as his constant occupation before the Holy Face, but the interest he took in the apparition of the Mother of

God to Bernadette in the grotto of Massabielle was no way inferior to that which he had felt when she manifested herself to the shepherd children on the mountain of La Salette; while the movement of devotion to which it gave rise and the marvels which attested its truth continued to rivet his attention most strongly. Hence this great event connects itself with the life of the holy man, and so far may aptly have a passing notice.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### LOURDES.

No sooner did M. Dupont hear of the apparition of the Immaculate Virgin in the grotto of Lourdes than he felt all the hopes which the miracle of La Salette had raised in his heart of the approaching triumph of the Church over the powers of Hell revive within him. He lost no time in obtaining full particulars by means of competent and intelligent persons, and his mind, always fertile in the comparison of things spiritual, dwelt upon the diversity of the signs accompanying the two manifestations. "At La Salette Mary weeps; at Lourdes she smiles. At La Salette she wears on her garments all the symbols of the Passion; at Lourdes may we not regard her white robe, her blue girdle, and her radiant countenance, as a vestment of joy? At La Salette she utters alarming threats, she speaks of scourges, as Pius IX. read in the secret communications of the two children; at Lourdes she

simply exhorts us to pray for sinners. This is a most sweet word : such an exhortation necessarily implies that God desires to pardon ; whereas it is altogether different when He is unwilling to forgive. For instance, He forbids Moses and Isaias to pray for His people, lest they should be converted, and He heal them.\* Again, at La Salette Mary hides her hands when she speaks to the children—Melanie told me so in 1847—at Lourdes she lets her hands be seen, she raises them, joins them, lays them near her heart. Now, the hands are the symbol and the expression of liberality : ‘*Aperis Tu manum, et imple omne animal benedictione*—Thou openest Thine hand, and fillest every living creature with blessing.’† To-day Mary wishes to give, and she is rich enough to give abundantly. But first she makes a request ; she asks for a sanctuary on the spot where she showed herself, to perpetuate the memory of her visit of mercy. This ought to inspire a singular confidence. She did not ask for a sanctuary at La Salette. But, seeing she did so at Lourdes, it is because we are about to emerge from the era of demolition, and to enter on that of reconstruction. ‘*Tempus destruendi, tempus œdificandi*—There is a time to destroy, and a time to build.’‡ Mary could not bid us build, if God were about to permit Satan to destroy.”

Elsewhere he writes, “ This second appeal, we must hope, will be heard, and make us enter at once on that great work of reparation which was foretokened by the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The survivors of an infidel philosophy will break their wretched teeth against the rock of Massabielle, while

\* Isaias vi. 10. Comp. Exod. xxxii. 10 ; Deut. ix. 14.

† Psalm cxliv. 16. ‡ Eccles. iii. 3.

children will find health and an abundance of graces as they stoop to dip their hands in the miraculous fountain. Very different indeed are the several lots; and this will be still more marked when the fashion of this world shall have passed away. Then will they who are shut out from the heavenly country never cease saying, '*Insensati*—We fools;'<sup>\*</sup> but let us, who believe in the misery of being separated from God in time and in eternity, devote ourselves with all our heart to those works which may help sinners to return to the good God. Certain it is that, if the fact of La Salette had been more generally believed and proclaimed, France and all Europe would have entered full sail on the way of conversion. In obeying the command to erect a chapel, we shall be entering on that way."

Thus wrote M. Dupont twenty years ago. To us, who have witnessed all the wonders of which Lourdes has been the scene, and the movement impelling crowds towards that sacred spot, it is interesting to see the holy man thus, as it were, reading the future. Towards the close of his life, he had the consolation of seeing the beginning of this great work of reparation by the erection of the church of Notre Dame de Lourdes, and by the great extension and development of the pilgrimages. "If our fathers in the time of the Crusades," he said, "exclaimed '*Dieu le veut*—God wills it,' we, children of the nineteenth century, have full right to say with confidence, '*Marie le veut*—Mary wills it.' Everywhere this good Mother desires to direct us to Jesus. Yes, it is in the order of things that Mary should bring us back to Jesus. It is not for herself she is pleading when she says to Bernadette,

<sup>\*</sup> Wisdom v. 4, &c.

## M. DUPONT.

Tell the priests to raise a sanctuary here ; to this spot the people will come in procession.' Mary knew well that it would be the means of bringing thousands of souls who from the grotto would repair to the Eucharistic Banquet."

As for the miracles wrought in the name of our Lady of Lourdes, no one was less disposed to wonder at them than he. It may almost be said that one of the first favours of this kind was obtained through his instrumentality. A relative of his, living in the vicinity of Lourdes, kept him regularly informed of all that was going on there. This was during the period of Bernadette's visions, at which crowds were present. She had immediately proceeded to the spot, and M. Dupont received a letter from her, giving an account of everything that had happened up to the fifth apparition, just as he was leaving his house one morning to pay a visit to the Little Sisters of the Poor. He read it, and, putting it in his pocket, turned his mind to other things. On reaching their house, he observed one of the Sisters engaged in work which usually fell to the share of another, and upon inquiring he was told that the latter was suffering severely from toothache. As he passed on, he found the poor sister wringing her hands and not knowing what to do with herself, so excruciating was the pain. She had her rosary in her hand, and he said to her, "My good Sister, after every decade repeat three times this invocation: 'O Immaculate Mary, who deignest to appear at Lourdes, cure me.'" The Sister did as he desired, and, as M. Dupont was leaving the house, he was told by the portress that the pain had ceased entirely, while she was in the act of saying her Rosary.

He seems to have gone straight from their house to

that of the Sisters of Charity, the Superioress of which related to the Abbé Janvier what took place. It was their hour of recreation, and the Sisters were all collected in the parlour. They were always enchanted to see the holy man and hear him talk of God. He entered beaming with smiles, and holding a medal in his hands. "Do you see this little medal?" he said. "It has just come to me from Lourdes, and has already worked a miracle." He then related what had just occurred—how one of the Little Sisters had been completely relieved of a violent toothache. No mention of the medal, it may be observed, was made in the previous account, but it had evidently played its part in the cure. All desired to have a nearer view, to hold it in their hands, to press it reverently to their lips. Now, one of their number, Sister Rosalie, had been a cripple for two years, unable to walk owing to weakness and pain in her legs. This was a great trouble to her, because it prevented her going out and visiting the poor. "Oh, Sir," she said to the servant of God, "will you let me have your medal to lay on my foot, that it may cure me too, so that I may be able to go and see my sick people?" "Willingly," replied M. Dupont; "take it." "And what am I to do with it?" said the Sister; "what prayer am I to say? Am I to begin a novena?" "No, no," he rejoined quickly; "not such a long affair as that, my Sister. Say simply, 'My God, by our Lady of Lourdes, my good Mother, cure me, that I may be able to go and see my poor people.'" The Sister did as he told her. She placed the medal on her foot, and made the invocation. "Come," said M. Dupont, "get up and walk round the room." The Sister rose, and was able to walk round the parlour, but with pain and difficulty. "Are

you cured?" asked M. Dupont. "No, not quite." "Well, begin again." So the medal was replaced, and the prayer again said. After this a fresh attempt at walking, with better success, but still the cure was not perfect. However, Sister Rosalie, encouraged by so much improvement, made a vow aloud to visit the Holy Face in M. Dupont's house if she were perfectly cured; and, the next day, she who for two years had not been able to walk or leave the house, made her pilgrimage from the Rue des Récollets to the Rue St. Etienne, alone, without assistance or support, and returned in the same way without pain or fatigue. From that day she suffered no more in her legs, and was able to resume her work of charity in the parish of St. Gatien, in which she persevered till her death, which occurred six years later.

But this was not all. There was a newly-arrived postulant in the community, forty years of age, who was afflicted with a gastric complaint which caused frequent vomitings. Fearing to be refused admission, she had committed the fault of concealing the state of her health, and as yet no one was aware of it. She knew, however, that sooner or later the truth must betray itself, and, as her malady would incapacitate her for any serious work, she was sure to be rejected. The thought now occurred to her, while the medal was being passed from one to the other, to profit by the opportunity to seek a cure. Taking it, then, in her hand, she pressed it to her lips, interiorly saying, "My God, through the faith which M. Dupont has in our Lady of Lourdes, heal me, that I may remain in this house." Instantly she felt within herself that she was cured. After waiting a few days to make sure of the fact, she went to the Superioress, and told her all: how she had culpably concealed her condition, and had been radically cured by virtue of M. Dupont's medal. She never had any re-



turn of the complaint, and became an active member of the community, in which she lived for many years.

It will be seen that M. Dupont had reason to believe that a close connection subsisted, from the very beginning, between the grotto of Lourdes and the little oratory of the Holy Face. Another proof may be adduced, and, indeed, ought not to be omitted, for the cure we are about to relate was that of an individual well known to the Catholic public as the historian of Notre Dame de Lourdes—M. Henri Lasserre. He himself wrote the account of it, that he might place it in the hands of M. Dupont as a token of his faith and gratitude. He begins by recapitulating the particulars of his first cure by the water of Lourdes. Having always enjoyed excellent sight, he had presumed too much on its strength, and had tried it most imprudently by literary work, prolonged during the hours of night. In the summer of 1862, he felt his eyes gradually failing him. Soon he could not read three or four lines without experiencing an insufferable sense of pressure, which compelled him to desist. Medical remedies only aggravated the evil, and he could now no longer disguise from himself the sad truth that the injury inflicted was irremediable, and that he was menaced with the loss of the use of his eyes, if not with complete blindness. The dread of what seemed inevitable caused him great depression of spirits, which he strove to conceal from his friends, who, on their part, were possessed by the same fears, though they endeavoured to encourage him with hopes of amendment which they did not really entertain. At last he was induced by a friend \* to have recourse to the miraculous waters

\* Those who are not acquainted with the fact will be surprised to learn that the person alluded to was not only a non-Catholic, but one

of Lourdes, and was rewarded by an instantaneous cure. This cure, however, was not permanent, and M. Lasserre had humbly accepted his partial relapse as a personal chastisement. The rest shall be given in his own words :—

“The Père Gratry,” he says, “having heard of the miraculous cure of which I had been the subject, wrote to me eagerly inquiring if the report were really true. I replied, stating briefly what had occurred. P. Gratry was then at Tours, and I resolved, in order to see him, to pass through that city on my way back to Paris. Other affairs besides called me in that direction. While conversing with the illustrious Oratorian, he mentioned M. Dupont’s name; I do not remember for what reason, but it was quite accidentally. ‘M. Dupont!’ I exclaimed, ‘why he is a man whom for several years I have wished to know; and often have I entertained the idea of stopping at Tours, on my way to the Dordogne, in order to pay him a visit. I cannot imagine how it is that, having for some days past been intending to come here, and having been actually in the place all the morning, the thought of seeing him has never crossed my mind. Certainly I will not lose the opportunity of going this very day to make his acquaintance.’ And so I put off my return to Paris to a later hour.

“It is well worth the trouble of stopping at Tours, or even of making the journey, on purpose to visit M. Dupont. One word will explain all: in his house, which Heaven has blessed, at the simple application of a miraculous oil by his hands the words of the Gospel and the prophecy of Isaais are literally

who has since shown himself to be a bitter enemy of the Catholic religion, M. de Freycinet.

realised: '*Cæci vident, claudî ambulant, leprosi mundantur, surdî audiunt*—The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear.'\* In visiting him, I had no thought of asking anything whatever for myself. I hoped that, on my return to Paris, I should cure myself of my partial relapse with the water of Lourdes. I was much averse to using any other means but that which had succeeded so well before, or having recourse to any other intercession. My only object was to make the acquaintance, and get a near view, of this servant of God, of whom I had heard so much, and further to improve myself by converse with him, and beg the help of his prayers for a great miracle in the moral order, the miracle of my own thorough conversion.

"M. Dupont was at home when I presented myself. I had to wait a minute in a tolerably large room on the ground-floor. I looked about me, while the servant went to announce me to the master of the house. Furniture simple; here and there some *ex-votos* suspended on the walls. Close to a writing-table, covered with papers, a kind of desk in the form of a lectern supporting a large open book; I saw it was a Bible. But what chiefly attracted and riveted my attention was that over a piece of furniture hung one of those pictures of the Holy Face which represent the countenance of our Lord such as it imprinted Itself on the day of His Passion upon the veil of Veronica. Before this Holy Face a lamp was burning, or rather a night-light floating on some clear oil in a glass vase. The door opened, and M. Dupont entered. I strove to master my emotions. He inquired what service He could do me, and I told him that my visit had no

\* Isaias xxxv. 5, 6; St. Matthew xi. 5.

other object than that of making his acquaintance ; that I had come to see him from the report of all the marvels and miracles which people said took place in his house. ‘Yes, Sir,’ he replied in a tone of simple familiarity which struck me, ‘it will soon be eleven years since in this room, and before this Holy Face, our Lord began to do His own works.\* And He has deigned to choose the house of a miserable creature like me, that no one might suspect that the merits of man had any share therein, and to prove clearly that it is He Himself who does all.’” M. Lasserre then asked him on what occasion the marvels he spoke had begun to manifest themselves. M. Dupont complied, and told him what we know already, and how, when he first exposed the Holy Face in his room, he was very far from anticipating that it would become a place of pilgrimage and the scene of countless miracles. He concluded with that heartfelt exclamation so often on his lips : ‘How great is God ! How good is God !’”

He had finished his story, but his visitor sat as it were still listening. After a moment’s silence, he said, “Yes, assuredly God is good ! No one knows this better than I do, and no one was ever more ungrateful to such a benefactor. The miracles which He performs here do not surprise me, having myself been the subject of a favour similar to those worked before this holy picture ; but I have shown myself unworthy of it, and I now see that the hand of God is about to cast me into my former state.” M. Lasserre then told him of his miraculous cure by the water of Lourdes, and how he was threatened with a relapse, which he ascribed to his ingratitude. “M. Dupont,”

\* *A commence à faire des siennes* : a familiar expression, which cannot be adequately rendered in English.

he continues, "did not appear surprised. 'It often happens,' he said, 'that there are relapses of this kind, and some that are even more complete; and I have remarked that they usually proceed from one or other of two causes: either the person has been ashamed to bear witness of his cure before men, or he has been neglectful in returning thanks to God.' 'I have not much human respect,' I replied, 'and so have not been ashamed to confess the miracle with which I was favoured, but I have failed in returning thanks, and was scarcely cured before I resumed my ordinary course of life.' 'Every fault can be repaired,' rejoined M. Dupont. 'We will invoke the Lord, pray before the Holy Face, and anoint your eyes with this miraculous oil. Perhaps that may do you some good.' 'No,' I said, 'I was cured once by the Blessed Virgin honoured at Lourdes; it is against her that I have sinned, and it is she, I hope, who will obtain my pardon and cure. I am waiting till my return to Paris, to rub my eyes again with that miraculous water. I recoil from seeking any other intercession, and I feel as if I should be wanting in some sort to the Queen of Angels if I had recourse to any other power but hers.'

"M. Dupont smiled. 'Heaven,' he said gently, 'has none of these jealousies; however, since such is your feeling, here is a medal, given me by P. Hermann, which he himself dipped in the water of Lourdes. It has already served to work several cures. Would you like to try it? Apply it successively to both your eyes, and let us repeat together this prayer: Holy Virgin Mary, show thyself as powerful at Tours as thou hast been in the grotto of Lourdes.' This attempt, several times renewed, proved fruitless, and

then M. Dupont," says the narrator, "without seeming the least disturbed, and raising his eyes, as one speaking to invisible powers, said, 'Well, Holy Virgin Mary, since thou refusest us this cure, we are going to address ourselves directly to thy Son.' We prayed together for a short while; M. Dupont then dipped his finger in the oil which was burning before the Holy Face, and anointed my eyelids, my forehead, and below the eyebrows, wherever I felt the painful and ominous pressure of which I have spoken."

But as yet no cure followed. M. Dupont inquired if he felt any relief, and he mournfully answered that he was not conscious of any. "We will pray together again this evening," said the holy man, who seemed a little surprised at the resistance of the malady. He detained his visitor to dinner, but the evening unctions had no better success than those of the morning. M. Dupont was evidently grieved, but being, as M. Lasserre observes, familiar with things of the spiritual order, he did not lose hope. On the contrary, he bade his visitor be of good heart, and gave him a little bottle of the oil, saying that they would consider what had been done as the first day of a novena. "You will," he continued, "make the unctions yourself, and join in the prayers offered here daily from eleven to two o'clock." "On taking leave," says M. Lasserre, "he permitted me to embrace him. That evening I took the rail to Paris, where I arrived at four o'clock in the morning. I went to bed at once, and it was late when I awoke. My first thought was to apply the unctions and say the prayers which M. Dupont had indicated. They had no result. It was now about half-past ten. Towards mid-day, as I was going to my work, I suddenly felt all the weight re-

moved from my eyes, and a flood of health, as it were, penetrating under the lids and over my brow, usually so oppressed. The grace of Heaven had all of a sudden poured down in a torrent, like those rains which, long invoked, come when they are least expected in a blessed stream to gladden the earth. I then remembered that it was the hour at which prayer was being said at M. Dupont's house, and I seemed to have an intuition of it. Ever since that day, my sight has been perfectly restored. A year has elapsed, and I have had no return of the malady. Three or four times, it is true, I have been conscious of some slight weakness in my eyes, so slight that it neither interrupted nor interfered with my work, and, indeed, would have been unnoticed but for my recollection of the past, so that, if I allude to it, it is only from a scrupulous desire to state the exact truth. To relieve these trifling ailments, which were next to nothing, I always employed the oil of the Holy Face, and with complete effect."

M. Dupont, as has been remarked, was not himself able to visit Lourdes, but he never failed to encourage others to go, and often paid the expenses of the journey for friends of limited means, or for the poor. His memory is recorded there by a picture of the Holy Face, which some pious persons of Tours, through the interest of the Carmelites of Lourdes, caused to be placed in the subterranean chapel of the Basilica. On it is inscribed a verse of the Psalms, the application of which readily suggests itself: "*Propter David servum Tuum non avertas faciem Christi Tui*—For Thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of Thine Anointed."\*

\* Psalm cxxxi. 10.



## CHAPTER XXI.

## M. DUPONT'S LOVE OF HOLY CHURCH.

THE interests of the Church of God formed the continual subject of M. Dupont's prayers at the Nocturnal Adoration and before the Holy Face. Ever since the war in Italy, the dangers which menaced Catholicism had greatly occupied his mind, but, in spite of the dark clouds which hung on the horizon, hope in his mind greatly predominated over fear. The Church of God, the Bride of the Lamb, must triumph: that is a settled point, as all Catholics know. M. Dupont, however, not only knew and believed this truth, but he realised it with a most intimate conviction, and felt in his heart the anticipatory joy of triumph. He was quick, therefore, to perceive all the prognostications of its approach, and many such he believed there to be. The world to him appeared flooded with supernatural graces, and, although trials also abounded, through which it pleased God that the Sovereign Pontiff, the clergy, and faithful Catholics should pass, yet even these were to him the signs and harbingers of unexpected deliverance, and so also was the increased activity and rage of Satan. His whole correspondence is full of these impressions, marking at once his intense love of the Church and his confident hopes of victory near at hand. "Do not the multiplied efforts of Satan unquestionably prove," he writes, "that the monster roars because he understands that the Church is on the eve of one of her most splendid triumphs?" He was greatly struck

with the work of grace which he observed to be going on in numerous hearts, and he marvelled that there should be so many Catholics who seemed hardly sensible of it. Those, he would say, who do not see this movement of grace are exceedingly to be pitied. They do not love ; this is the secret of their discouragement. The devotion and fervent prayers of numbers of holy souls whom he knew to be advancing in the way of perfection were also to him a great source of confidence in the approaching triumph of the Church and the "renovation of the earth." He adduced the instance of a courageous Sister of St. Vincent de Paul who had just died at Paris in the odour of sanctity. "With what ardent sighs," said he, "did she plead for this renovation of the earth ! During twelve consecutive years she offered to God for this intention her life passed in the midst of the most excruciating pains, but always radiant with joy. Happily," he added, "the number of these voluntary victims is great enough to counterbalance the multitude who set themselves to fight against Heaven and draw down chastisements upon us."

The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Conception of Mary might be called the two poles of his hope regarding this future triumph. At the first news of the definition of 1854, he could not contain himself for joy. In writing to a friend, he exclaims, "How good is God to have inspired Pius IX. with the thought of pronouncing the definitive judgment by his sole authority ! What an argument in favour of unity, as contrasted with the medley of all errors which forms the camp opposed to the light ! Now let us recall that beautiful thought of Dom Guéranger, when speaking of the prediction of St. Leonard of Port Maurice : "On the day of the

promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the surges of God's wrath will roll back upon themselves." The beatification of the Venerable Margaret Mary Alacoque, with the extension of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, was in His eyes a most important event, which he considered to be a pledge of salvation. "The triumph of the Sacred Heart," he said, "introduces us into an era which, to all appearance, will be very glorious to the Church and very profitable to souls. This last stroke will sweep out of the world all the remaining pollutions of Jansenism. All glory to the Sacred Heart! Hell, it is true, is let loose; but is not this one of the symptoms of impending defeat? The marvellous things occurring in England are more than sufficient to exasperate the monster, who imagined himself to be as peaceable there as in a fortress." In speaking of the triumph of the Church, he made frequent allusions to England. The conversions taking place on this side of the Channel were a subject of lively interest to him, and he founded the most magnificent hopes upon the progress which the faith was making in our country. In 1846 we find him recommending the *Tablet* to one of his god-daughters. "You can have nothing better," he says, "than that journal for making yourself acquainted with the movement of the ancient Isle of Saints towards Holy Church, her abandoned desolate mother. But what joy irradiates the countenances of these happy conquerors of the demon of heresy! I have just been spending three weeks at Saint-Servan in the closest intimacy with three converted Anglican ministers.\* You cannot form an idea of their happiness. But to

\* These were the late Canon Glenie, the late Rev. M. Watt Russell, and Mr. E. G. Kirwan Browne,

blinded worldly eyes they have paid a hard price for it. All three have given up excellent positions to embrace Catholicism." If his hopes for England were sanguine, it may be observed that with regard to Switzerland his prognostications were very different, and events have served to prove their correctness.

His intense love and admiration for the person of Pius IX. added to the reverence and devotion which he felt for him as Head of the Church: "beloved by God and Christians," he said, "but horribly hated by Satan and his miserable victims." The promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the beatification of Margaret Mary Alacoque, the summoning of the Vatican Council, and the many other memorable acts of that great Pontiff, he regarded as so many rays of glory adding fresh lustre to the Papal crown and conferring incalculable benefits on society. Rome, the city of the Popes and the centre of Christendom, was dear and sacred in his eyes. The invasion and seizure of the holy city in 1871 was therefore a great trial and affliction to him, which he had need of all his confidence to bear up against. A few years previous to this disastrous event, he had felt his heart bound with joy and admiration at seeing the enthusiasm for the Holy See which impelled so many of his young countrymen to enroll themselves as Pontifical Zouaves. On November 5th, 1867, he writes, "The same breath which inspired St. Louis and his valiant knights now animates our Christian youth, who are flying to the aid of the Holy See." And again, on February 25th, 1868, "The Christian movement which has been excited in generous souls at the sight of the dangers menacing the Pope, has brought us back to the era of the Crusades." The disasters of

France during the Prussian invasion and occupation, while they caused him the deepest sorrow, did not shake his trust in the destinies of the eldest daughter of the Church. "Catholic France," he writes in 1872, "seems to be arising from the tomb. Let us hope, seeing that her first act after rising again has been to pray. What a grand spectacle is this continued stream of pilgrims to Lourdes and to so many other holy places! Let us redouble our confidence. It is that which will give victory to the children of God. If Satan kicks, it is because he is up to these things. He knows where the saddle galls him."

Although never leaving his station before the Holy Face, M. Dupont kept himself well informed of all that was taking place in the Church. This was chiefly through his extensive correspondence. Not a grief, not a joy, not a hope, not a fear, no matter in what part of the Catholic world, but found a responsive echo in his heart. He might have said with the Apostle, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalised, and I am not on fire?"\*—so completely did this true Christian identify himself with the soul of the Church, and live of her life. Hence the warm sympathy he felt for all those Catholic writers who were doing battle for the good cause, including the journalists. At one period of his life he and his friend, the Capitaine Marceau, had made a joint resolution to read no newspaper, and this partly from a spirit of mortification, and partly to prevent waste of time. But during the famous contest in which the Episcopate of France was engaged for obtaining freedom of education, he thought good to reconsider his determination. M. Léon Aubineau, one of the principal editors of the

\* 2 Cor. xi. 29.

*Univers*, was a member of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. It was thus that M. Dupont became intimately acquainted with him, and through him learned to know and appreciate the *Univers*, to which he subscribed, as he did subsequently to the *Monde*. His motive was the same in both cases ; the interest he took in the religious questions with which they dealt, and the advantage he derived from seeing their notices of Catholic books which might be serviceable to the Church and profitable to souls.

It may here be observed that the holy man never interested himself in political questions, as such. By birth and education a legitimist, he continued to be so by conviction, but he was never a party man. God was his sole aim and the sole rule of his actions. He therefore saw in politics only so much as had a bearing on the interests of religion and of the Church. From the rest he kept himself quite aloof, as if it did not exist for him. It was the same as regarded all administrative and departmental concerns, although his social position, his practical abilities, and his former profession, in which he had held a magisterial post of some importance, would naturally have pointed him out as a proper person to take an active share in them. But he never accepted any official employment at Tours, save that he consented to belong to the *Eabrique*, or Building Commission, of the parish of St. Martin ; at the same time he studiously avoided all the little distinctions to which he would have been thereby entitled at the Archiepiscopal palace, and ultimately withdrew from membership. He was keenly alive to the disastrous effect on society, and especially on the young, of a corrupt press, and desired with all his power to promote the publication of Catholic books

calculated to counteract the evil. So high was the opinion entertained of his judgment, that authors would often send their writings to him for the benefit of his opinion. A historian once begged him to make some critical observations upon a work he had just published. "M. Dupont," he says, "made none, or scarcely any, but, as I had abridged the most sacred names of our religion, I found beside the initials, J. C., N. S., the names *Jesus Christ*, *Notre Seigneur*, written in full by the hand of this worthy Christian, no remark being added. I was exceedingly struck and edified, and said to myself, 'There is a man of faith.' I have often profited since by this admonition, at once so just and so delicate."

M. Dupont had, for a layman, given considerable attention to theology. He was not what would be called a deep and learned theologian, but he had the gift of discerning without fail the slightest shade of error in the literature of the day. He had scarcely glanced over a book of a devotional or religious character but he immediately appreciated its value. A sort of Catholic instinct seemed to enable him to seize at once on any vulnerable point. "I have an unfortunate finger," he said one day to Mgr. d'Outremont: "when I open a book, I am sure to hit on the defective or unsound spot, if there be one."\* He was,

\* Striking examples might be quoted of this instinctive discernment of what was unorthodox in the case of persons of far less instruction than M. Dupont. Jeanne le Royer, known in religion as *Sœur de la Nativité*, and famous for her extraordinary graces and the revelations made to her of the approaching horrors of the French Revolution, was an illiterate peasant girl. In her *Life*, written, or, rather, dictated by obedience, she says, speaking of the supernatural light which she received, "It is by the help of this light that I have often condemned, as it were against my will, certain books which were given me to read to obtain my



however, a very careful reader, not contenting himself with merely looking through a book, if it were worth perusal, and was accustomed to take copious notes. The practice of skimming he considered to be a bad one, proceeding from a habit of reading superficial literature. To a man of the world, to whom he had sent a work of merit, he writes, "Do not answer me before you have read the book, or hasten to gobble it up, as people do those common-place volumes which contain nothing but wind. This is not an *omelette soufflée*, but a solid joint." He was merciless in the case of any bad books which he could lay his hands upon ; he reckoned them to be the product of Satan's agents, and felt a kind of exulting joy in destroying them. Some one having brought him several volumes of Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and similar writers, instead of putting them in the fire, he took a fancy to have a hole dug in his garden, and there he buried them, covering them with manure and planting potatoes over them. When the potatoes were dug up they proved to be the finest his garden had ever produced. Thereupon a grand consultation was held as to what was to be done with them. Were they to be sent to market, or served up at table, or were they to be given to the Little Sisters of the Poor ? There stood M. Dupont with folded arms, listening in silence as each gave his opinion. All of a sudden he raised his voice, and said, "Let them be given to the pigs ; they are fit for nothing else." Then, rubbing his

opinion of them. Without being well able to account for my judgment or give a reason for my condemnation of these works, yet, reading in them things which might seem indifferent, sometimes even good and well expressed, I recognised the malice of Satan, and the criminal object of the author. . . . I felt myself then animated with a holy indignation which compelled me to close the book, and sometimes to throw it away from me."

hands and laughing heartily, he turned towards a friend who had witnessed the scene, and said, "They are the produce of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques. Can they be good for anything but to feed swine?"

On the other hand, if in the course of his reading he met with a pious book which he thought would be profitable to souls, he would spare no trouble or expense in purchasing copies of it and distributing them; and he was in the habit of making a selection of passages which had struck him, and which he thought would be useful to himself or others. He composed a beautiful little volume called "*Thoughts on the Love of God*," the title of which was afterwards, when an enlarged edition was published, changed to that of *The Little Garden of Heaven: a Collection of Spiritual Thoughts*. These *Thoughts*, he said, were inspired by the Little Sisters of the Poor, and were put together for their use. They are all very simple and touching, and bear the mark of having been the fruit of prayer and of meditation on Scripture, being no dry and methodical compilation, but, whether adopted or original, evidently coming forth from the heart of him who utters them, a heart in which the fire of God's love never slackened, for it was being continually replenished before the Adorable Face of Him whom to gaze upon is to become like unto Him. We may here give a few extracts: "O my God, when shall I be able to read the precept of loving Thee written on my heart by Thine own hand? When will it be granted me to love Thee without distraction amid the weary toils and trials of the world? O my God, since Thou hast taken the title of our Father, how sweet it would be to me to love Thee with a filial tenderness and with the simplicity of a child! To die in the habit of love, to die in the act of pure love—how

blessed an end ! but to die of love, this would be the crown of all my desires, were it permitted me to carry them so far.—The faithful soul is the ‘lily amid thorns.’ Such a lily never leans to one side or the other ; it keeps itself upright, it unfolds its leaves and expands its heart towards heaven, to receive its dew and its refreshing influences, for fear of losing aught thereof by bending down towards the earth.—The heart which abandons itself most perfectly to God is that which is best guarded.—The heart which meditates on the goodness of God must love Him or cease to be a heart.—My God, Thou art all love, for Thy works breathe love ; Thy commandments are love ; our vocation is nothing but love. But how few there are who understand the language of love !—O sacred altar, when I look upon thee, when, above all, I fix my eyes on the place where the Tabernacle reposes—oh, I cannot resist the transports of joy which ravish my soul ! In contemplating thee, the throne of the Divine Lamb, my heart opens, it dilates, it melts, as it were, in the fire of love. When wilt thou arrive, O blessed moment, when my Adorable Saviour shall come to rest therein ?—Knock at the Heart of Jesus by confidence and love. It will open to you, and thence shall descend upon you an abundance of graces.”

Thus his writings as well as his words breathed only holy love, tending, like his prayers, to one single aim, the glory of God in His Church and in the salvation of souls. When he published his little work, which had wonderful success and a very wide circulation, he did not put his name to it, and evaded accepting the numerous commendations addressed to him. Finally, however, he acknowledged himself to be the author, and said to his friend M. d’Avrainville,

"The *Thoughts on the Love of God* are the poor pilgrim's, who has retained only one of them: 'My God, when shall I love Thee?' "

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES EMINENT IN M. DUPONT.

THE general course of our narrative, in which we have not been able to adhere to a strict chronological order, but have been obliged by the nature of the subject sometimes to cast a look forward, has brought us to about the year 1870, a melancholy date for France, which was entering on a period of bitter trial; we will not say that it was a melancholy date for our holy man, for no such feeling as melancholy or gloom could find access to a mind like his, but it marks the commencement of a series of trials through which it was God's will that His servant should pass before calling him to his reward. These trials were to spare neither mind nor body; he was to be afflicted in every portion of his being. He was to behold France invaded and overrun by its enemies, the city of his adoption, the city of St. Martin, bombarded and occupied by a hostile army, and, as a result, every work of zeal and charity which he had nearest at heart deranged or broken up. Meanwhile age was creeping on him, and not age alone, but infirmities of a most crippling nature; he was gradually to lose the use of his limbs and be condemned to a life of isolation, of powerlessness, and, finally, of utter inability to move. But before enter-

ing on these closing years and plunging into the shadows gathering around his path, it may be well to stay our steps and cast a passing look at the distinguishing virtues of this glorious Christian, and collect a few scattered facts connected with them which hitherto may not have found their appropriate place.

No one can take the most cursory view of Léon Dupont without being struck with the heroic degree in which the theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity—were possessed and practised by him. Much has already been said about his faith, and every page of his life exhibits it. To all who knew him, or had the opportunity of observing him, it appeared to be his dominant virtue, as it was, indeed, the motive of all his actions and the principle on which his whole life was grounded. In this respect, it may be said that he did not substantially differ from other eminent Christians, nevertheless the form in which his faith displayed itself had something in it so peculiar that it seemed to be the result of a Providential design. So, indeed, thought the Abbé Botrel, who knew him well. "He was truly," he says, "the man of faith, a faith strong, simple, and constant, which manifested itself rather in his habitual conduct and in his ordinary actions, which were marked by a rare and uniform consistency, than in the tokens and practices of an interior and mystical life. I mean that what was most observable in M. Dupont, and what I believe appertained to his Providential mission in the world, was the visible operation of faith, the sensible presence, so to say, of that virtue, which rendered him a docile instrument 'ready to every good work.' It was this simplicity of divine faith which gave such perfect unity to his life, and constituted, as it were, its staple,

never belying itself either in public or in private ; always the same, so that it seemed almost to have become his very nature. With this, however, was united a certain unaffected dignity, which had its origin, no doubt, in the seriousness of his nature, but was elevated and informed by that superior spirit with which his beautiful soul animated his slightest actions." Such, indeed, seems to have been his call from God : to testify, not in word only, but in deed, to the power of faith before an incredulous and faint-hearted generation.

The Abbé Botrel goes on to say that his faith had another special characteristic. It has been seen how, while submissively awaiting the decision of Holy Church, the one infallible authority where it is question of the supernatural, he welcomed with ready belief, subject to this reserve, several recent manifestations of that character ; as, for instance, the apparition of our Lady at La Salette, and again at Lourdes. In regard to such matters, there was no hesitation or holding back on his part. If any one, however, should be disposed to say that this was but the result of his natural temperament, and that he would have been equally disposed to believe a thing to be supernatural which was merely natural, or to be divine which was really diabolical, it may be replied that, not only was he possessed of great native shrewdness, which in itself would have prevented him from being the victim of credulity, but that he was gifted moreover with a high spiritual discernment, a kind of instinct, so to call it, which made him perceive the spirit of evil at work where it was often not suspected. The Abbé Botrel says that M. Dupont detected or had a presentiment of imposture where

many good persons were deceived; and he specifies a remarkable instance of the kind. "When I recall to mind," he added, "what I have seen in this dear friend of God, so zealous for His glory, I feel myself constrained to reckon him among those holy souls whom it pleases our Lord at times to make, as it were, touchstones for the discernment, often difficult, of the true and the false." There was a purity and a firmness in his faith which made him reject the least admixture of the spirit of human wisdom and worldly prudence, and, still more, the slightest taint of what Pius IX. so justly branded under the name of "Liberal Catholicism." His mind revolted at all that opposed itself, in the least degree, to what was true and right in the matter of doctrine and of principle. The very simplicity and purity of his faith was the source of its energy and of its commanding power; as his eye was single, so his whole body was full of light.

To this character of his faith we may also attribute his extraordinary equality and serenity of mind, for he dwelt in a region far above the storms of this mundane atmosphere, and could truly look down upon them and estimate their vanity. Faith set him on that mountain of God—that "mountain of fat pastures"—spoken of in Holy Writ.\* "How good it is," he said one day, "to place ourselves on this mountain, that we may perceive the littleness of human combinations! Let us enter more and more into the life of faith, my dear friend, in order to appreciate the nothingness of earth and raise ourselves above its oscillations."

The Abbé Botrel, as we have just seen, called M. Dupont the "dear friend of God." To be the friend of God

\* Ezekiel xxxiv. 14.



is a wonderful idea. That God should be a friend to us, His poor creatures, is conceivable, but that He should value our friendship in return would have been beyond the highest flight of the most presumptuous imagination, had not revelation taught us that so it is. Thus, Abraham, the father of the faithful, is emphatically called in Scripture the friend of God.\* God Himself gives him that name. Friends converse together, and without such converse friendship is not considered to exist. There may be compassion, kindness, benevolence, even love, but friendship, properly speaking, there is not. Friendship, so to say, equalises by uniting. Now, this marvel faith brings about. It bridges over the distance between God in Heaven and man on earth. It unveils the invisible. It realises God's personal nearness. "The spirit of faith," said the Curé of Ars, "consists in speaking to God as one would speak to a man." In M. Dupont this was perfectly exemplified. On his knees before the Holy Face, praying for those who had solicited his help, his whole appearance bespoke confidence and his intense realisation of addressing one near and present to him. This was the impression he conveyed rather than of being absorbed in prayer, as is the case with many holy persons thus engaged, who will seem to be absent in spirit and as if carried elsewhere. M. Dupont, in fact, was speaking and conversing with God as with one more intimately present to him than any other being. Now and then he would turn round to the sick person and ask him in all simplicity whether he was cured. He was as simple about miraculous cures as about everything else; nay, if possible, more simple, because, as has

\* 2 Paral. xx. 7; Isaias xli. 8; James ii. 23.

been noticed, he considered them the easiest things in the world to obtain, and the way to obtain them to be, above all, simplicity. "The class of people who get most," he would say, "are the peasants. I have seen many people present themselves before the Holy Face, saying 'Oh! I am not worthy to have my prayer granted.' I do not like that. That is not the proper way of speaking. The question is not what you are worthy of; you are worthy of compassion: that is all. You must make your needs known, and believe." To excite others to faith, and bring home to their minds how easy a thing a miracle was, he would remind them of that title of God, *Creator omnium*—"Creator of all things," he would say, looking straight at the sufferer to encourage him; and his realisation of the Almighty power of God was so vivid, that the very expression of his countenance would make those who witnessed it feel that nothing, however prodigious, would astonish them. You had, indeed, only to see or hear him pray to be impressed with the plenitude and simplicity of his faith. The very tone of his voice revealed it, so that even the most pious priests and fervent religious have declared that they felt their own faith fortified and rekindled thereby.

In everything that happened, even though in its human aspects it was most disastrous and apparently most detrimental to the interests of religion, his faith beheld the action of Divine Providence and the accomplishment of the Divine Will. Thus, when the terrible conflagration which took place in a church at Santiago, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, was exciting the greatest sensation throughout the civilised world, a lady of Tours felt herself tempted to murmur against God for having allowed so many

devout clients of His Virgin Mother to perish by so frightful a catastrophe at the very time when they were rendering her their homage. Meeting M. Dupont in the street, she gave expression to her distress in passionate terms. "But, madam," he said, "you let your feelings carry you away. Instead of being afflicted, you ought rather to be thankful. See, I pray you, how, whilst His earthly children were occupied in glorifying their heavenly Mother, God chose that very moment for calling them to Himself and transported them straight into His Paradise. In an instant they are saved, they are happy ; it is not a disaster, it is a mercy, and one of the greatest that could have befallen them." "I did not venture to reply," adds the lady, who was herself the Abbé Janvier's informant. "He was in another sphere. I looked only to earth, he to heaven."

Faith was the clue to his whole life ; he seemed, as we have just said with reference to his prayer, to be not so much absorbed in God as established in God. He truly walked in His presence. This imparted a consistency and a unity to all he felt and all he did. Thoughts, conversation, labour, repose converted his surroundings into a kind of sanctuary. With him it was God always and God alone. We have seen how it was unendurable to him to dwell upon other subjects, and how he would abscond from any society where worldly topics were introduced ; nay, he could even forget, or rather forego, his natural politeness at his own table, to express his dislike when the conversation was diverted to things mundane. One day, when several persons were dining with him, and the talk, without being reprehensible, became secular in its character, their host, after remaining silent for a

moment or two, suddenly exclaimed, "I see that you are feeding like so many dogs and cats without a thought of God. Do you not know that life is too short to talk about anything but God? Life is the shortest thing I know of." Certainly such an outbreak on the part of any ordinary man could not have failed to give great offence, and would really have been offensive. Few, indeed, would be entitled to act in such a way, and fewer still could do so naturally. To our holy man, however, it came quite naturally; this divested what he said of all asperity, and consequently no one was displeased; on the contrary, we are assured that the guests were quite charmed by his tone and manner. When he had no control over the conversation and no means of getting away from what was to him insipid talk, he was silent, and very commonly fell asleep.

That faith which made him realise the unseen so vividly, inspired him with the profoundest reverence for whatever appertained to the Divine service. Hence his unbounded respect for priests. This was displayed, not only towards those with whom he was acquainted, but in the case of such as he casually met on his journeys. He would pay them every possible attention which politeness or charity could dictate, looking after their luggage and making himself their willing servant in the most unaffected manner. But his great delight was to serve Mass, and whenever the opportunity offered he eagerly embraced it. The angelic recollection with which he discharged an office which brought him in such close proximity to the altar, could not but strike every one who saw him; priests themselves were greatly edified, and many could aver, with the good Curé of Corbelin, that ever since M. Dupont had

served their Mass, they felt their devotion to the Adorable Eucharist increased.

Hope, the second theological virtue, rose in him to the level of his faith. It had struck such deep roots in his heart that nothing could possibly discourage him. Truly he was a man of hope, not merely a hopeful man, which, by nature, he probably was, but a man full of supernatural hope, through the power of divine grace. Nothing could shake this hope, because such was his reliance on God's Providential action in the world, that he rejected with scorn all human reasoning and forestalments grounded upon apparent probabilities. "What do we know about the future?" he would say. "The precise contrary to what we fear will very likely happen. All such reflections are lost time. It is a distrust of the mercy, an outrage offered to the infinite merits, of the Divine Victim!" To a friend like-minded with himself, he writes, "Let us pray for France. In your solitude you can do much. It needs but one soul closely united to our Lord, and treating with Him concerning the interests of life eternal, to draw down countless blessings from Heaven. Scripture proves it." "Let us pray with confidence," he would continually say. "Let us blush to be wanting in that confidence which obtains everything it asks." He possessed it himself, not only experimentally, but as the deepest conviction of his reason. The Abbé Janvier relates how an animated discussion took place one day between M. Dupont and a professor of theology, in presence of two friends, from one of whom he heard the particulars. The question was of confidence in prayer. The professor maintained that, in praying for benefits of a purely natural order, we ought to offer our petition, if not with a sort of indifference, at least

without insisting upon what might possibly be opposed to the Divine Will. This sort of prayer was not at all relished by our holy man. According to him, we ought, so far from being indifferent, to pray with a species of importunity. "Our Lord," he said, "Himself invited us to do so when He gave us that charming comparison of the friend coming in the middle of the night and knocking repeatedly at the door until his friend opens to him, vanquished by importunity more than moved by friendship; and this without making any distinction as to the nature of our request." \* The two listeners thought he had by far the best of the argument, and the narrator said that his words made an impression on him which the lapse of twenty years had not effaced.

M. Dupont, basing his confidence upon the promise of our Lord in the Gospel, had taken up an impregnable position. Had He not bidden us, when asking for anything, believe firmly that we should obtain it, and that so it should be? † These words were ever on his lips. He would also frequently quote that beautiful reflection of St. Hilary's, which Cardinal Pie had taught him to know and love: "God, who moves us to pray to Him, cannot refuse to hear our prayers."

A fervent layman, director of an important charitable work at Paris, complained one day of the weakness of his eyes, which threatened him with the loss of sight. M. Dupont pointed to the Holy Face, and invited him to seek a cure, but the sufferer humbly protested, saying, "How can I expect God to concern Himself about such a trifling ailment of a miserable creature like me? Have I not many other favours far more necessary to ask of Him?" This did not please

\* St. Luke xi. 8. † St. Matthew xxi. 22; St. Mark xi. 24.

M. Dupont. He saw in it a want of faith and confidence, and took him up quite sharply. "Eh! do you not see that you are placing hindrances in the way of the good God? You must ask Him roundly to cure you, adding only, 'My God, for Thy glory!'" M. Dupont's trust was based on the boundless compassion of our Lord, but he did not fail to fortify it by confidence in the intercession of our Blessed Lady and the Saints. We have seen, for instance, the use he made of the water of La Salette and the value he set on St. Benedict's medal. He placed great reliance also on the medal of Immaculate Mary, commonly called the "miraculous medal." He had frequent recourse to it, and obtained, by virtue of it, many conversions and bodily cures.

M. Dupont considered Satan as the primary cause of all our maladies; and certainly the language of Scripture fully bears him out in this conviction. He was, therefore, continually employing prayer and supernatural means, not only to obtain spiritual favours of all kinds, but also for the relief of corporal infirmities, never doubting but that in themselves they were equally efficacious for both objects. If they did not produce the effect he looked for, he attributed the failure to want of confidence, and there seems no reason to regard this judgment as erroneous; for, although it may well be that our Lord often sees that it is to a man's spiritual advantage that he should continue to suffer in the body, it is seldom, if ever, that in such case the individual, however full of faith, has experienced any strong personal expectation of being healed. It cannot, indeed, be said that without such strong expectation no one ever receives a bodily cure, but its existence may almost be con-



sidered as a kind of pledge of the merciful purpose of Him who has permitted so confident a hope. Accordingly, as we have seen, it was M. Dupont's custom to excite this confident hope, based on supernatural motives, in all who applied to the Holy Face.

Revolutions, with their disastrous accompaniments—and he was called to witness many—never diminished his hopes regarding the future. He looked at things on their supernatural side, and believed that he discovered the hand of God in the miraculous facts with which this epoch of the world seemed to him to abound. The fiercer raged the conflict between good and evil, the stronger waxed his hopes, for, after all, it was the battle of the Lord, with whom victory must rest. He would often recall those words of King Josaphat, when he was in great peril from his enemies: “O our God, as we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee.”\* “It is good,” he would say, “to commit ourselves to the hands of God, and be sure that the result of every combat, of every struggle, depends, not on us, but on Him alone.” Weighing of difficulties was to him calculating our own strength, a sure way to be overcome. He who says, “I cannot,” never succeeds, for he is relying on himself. “St. Paul,” he would remark, “was more prudent and better advised when he exclaimed, ‘I can do all things in Him who strengthens me.’”† M. Dupont's soul was in a continual state of joy, the reflection of which could be seen in his countenance. He was always the same, and did not seem to know what it was to be depressed or out of spirits. Pained and afflicted he could be, but sad—never. “Only pagans are sad,”

\* 2 Paral. xx. 12.

† Phil. iv. 13.

he used to say. "When by baptism we enjoy the blessedness of having a father such as God, we ought to be always happy ; it is only Satan's slaves who are miserable."

The secret of his unchangeable peace was his close union with our Lord, and the love with which his heart was ever burning for his Divine Master. "If we only knew Him," he would say, "if we could only comprehend His love for us, what is there we should not be ready to do to please Him? Thy enemies, O my Jesus, were able to penetrate to the very depth of Thy Heart, and we, who wish to be Thy friends, too often, alas ! give up our hearts to such frivolous thoughts that Thou canst not enter in. Nevertheless do Thou reign in them, O Jesus, and make us free, despite ourselves and our cowardice, by subjecting us to Thy holy sovereignty." Speaking of a man of God who was full of zeal and fervour, he said, "This is a burning soul, consumed with the desire of procuring Veronicas for Jesus. Assuredly it is not possible to think of the continuation of the Passion\* without feeling a longing desire to offer some consolation to our Lord. It is an infallible means of washing away our sins in the ocean of mercy."

This love of our Lord so possessed him that he never wished to speak of anything else. "It is so good, so consoling," he said, "to converse heart to heart with Jesus, who suffers so bitterly from our silence. What advances He makes on His side ! Already, before the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit declared that our conversation ought to be of God : *'omnis enarratio tua in præceptis Altissimi*—Let all thy discourse be on

\* That is, in the Church, which is His body.—Col. i. 24.

the commandments of the Most High ! '\* Then, when Jesus comes in Person to explain to us the old law and promulgate the law of love, He assures us that we cannot gather together, however few we may be, but He is present in our midst, † in order to teach us the difference there is between pious colloquies and mere human conversation. I think, too, that we ought often to make the giddy votaries of the world hear those words : '*Si scires donum Dei!*—If thou didst know the gift of God !' ‡ And, in fact, ought we to talk of anything save our Lord ? How profitable it would be to us to be silent about all else ! But to speak we must love, 'for the mouth speaketh out of the abundance of the heart.' § Let us live, then, of our Lord, that not His blood only, but His thoughts, words, and actions may become ours. When the great Apostle said, 'We are the good odour of Jesus Christ,' || undoubtedly he no longer lived, but Jesus Christ lived in him. ¶ When you speak heart to heart with Jesus, beg Him to grant me some special graces that I may not forget how many I have already received. How much we should have to say without going beyond the circle within which every Christian ought to live enclosed ! God, God alone ! "

The love of Jesus made him love his neighbour, and filled him with zeal for the salvation of souls. This thought never left him, and his charity was often rewarded by signal conversions. When the contrary happened, his sorrow was poignant, proving how he truly loved his neighbour as himself. Writing to a missionary in America, whom he had formerly accom-

\* Ecclus. ix. 23. † St. Matthew xviii. 20. ‡ St. John iv. 10.

§ St. Matthew xii. 34 ; St. Luke vi. 45.

|| 2 Cor. ii. 15. ¶ Gal. ii. 20.

panied to his port of embarkation, he records a disappointment of this nature. He had just made a journey to Nantes to take a young man on board his ship who had been recommended as pilot by an intimate friend. "It was very unlike that dear journey of ours," he says. "My young protégé has no faith. I appointed him to meet me, on the morning when he was to embark, at half-past seven at the Church of Sainte Croix, which was on our road to the port. I arrived early enough to hear three Masses. Then, the hour for our meeting being past, I went out to see what had detained the young man. We met at the great door. 'I am just come,' he said. 'Well,' I replied, 'let us make a short prayer.' 'No.' 'Why, no? You are about to embark on a voyage of three thousand leagues.' 'I should not do it from my heart.' Thereupon, with my own heart torn with grief, we pursued our way. Will you not pray for this man? I will answer for it that you never heard such speeches from the lips of your savages. It is the rottenness of Europe which breeds such miseries. Pray, then."

Sister Francis Xavier, a fervent religious, whose Life and Letters have been recently published, gives an account of a journey she made in the *coupé* of a *diligence* with "a pious layman called M. Dupont, a resident at Tours." "We seemed," she says, "to spend the night as if at the gate of Paradise, talking of Jesus and Mary the whole time. He is twenty-five times more devout than I am. After finishing my Rosary, he made me say I know not how many good Aves for the conversion or perseverance of persons who needed help. Then from eleven till twelve o'clock we performed the Stations of the Cross on an indulgenced crucifix. Then we made a meditation aloud, each in

turn. When he proposed this to me, I thought it would make me laugh, or be the occasion of vanity, should any fine thought occur to me. Ah! if only you knew the depth of faith, simplicity, and love in the heart of this man! Instead of laughing I silently wept. We could not tear ourselves away from the Cross of Jesus, at the foot of which we found Mary. All the journeys made by this Apostolic man are so many pilgrimages. He is a saint, an angel, whom God sent to support me on my road, and to humble me, for I am but a worm compared with his deep faith and sublime humility. Whenever he saw a church-spire, he repeated in Latin a prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: 'There, and in all the churches of the world, Thou art present, O Jesus.' And then his soul seemed to dissolve in thinking of the love of our Lord. I fell asleep, but he continued his prayers till morning. When I awoke, he said to me, quoting the words of a saint, 'We must talk of God or be silent.' We did talk of this good Saviour, and, to profit by his advice and example, I in my turn talk of Him to you."

Though not invested with the priestly character, M. Dupont had all the tender solicitude of a good pastor, and all the untiring zeal of an Apostle. Like his Divine Lord, he was truly the "friend of sinners," and used every possible means and device with a view to their conversion. This love of souls showed itself in the interest he took in the reclamation of fallen women, that admirable work of mercy undertaken by the Nuns of the Refuge. He not only assisted them largely by his alms, but was instrumental in placing numbers of penitents under their charge. Of these objects of his charity he never lost sight. As long as they remained inmates of the asylum, he made constant

inquiries as to their condition and progress; and the Superioress relates how more than once she saw him kneel at the feet of some poor girl who was tempted with a desire to return to the world, and implore her to consult her soul's health by continuing to breathe the pure air of her religious home. Again, if he were unable to induce some one among them to perform the penance that had been imposed upon her for some fault or breach of discipline, as, for instance, to kiss the floor, he would say, "Ah, well, my child, I will do it for you," and, kneeling down, he would humbly perform the act himself. When the term of their probation had expired, he rendered active assistance in procuring situations for them in which their virtue would be secure, and was never tired of befriending them as occasion offered.

It has been observed that when profane subjects were introduced M. Dupont held his peace, not so, however, if anything was said which wounded charity, or assailed the reputation of any one. Then, indeed, he spoke out boldly and with authority in whatever company he might find himself, while never from his own lips did any one hear a word against his neighbour. On the contrary, he was always ready to seek excuses for their faults, and, if none could be found, at least to implore pardon for them. One instance is worth recalling, for it was of a character naturally most offensive to him. A young man, who had just left M. Dupont's house full of fervour from conversing with him about the Holy Eucharist, went straight to the cathedral, and, while praying before the altar, saw an officer in full uniform cross the nave of the church leading an enormous dog, and pass before the Blessed Sacrament without the slightest mark of

reverence. The pious worshipper returned to the holy man's house full of indignation at what he had witnessed, and giving expression to it in very bitter terms, but the servant of God checked him. "My young friend," he mildly said, "calm yourself, and consider that it was a poor blind man who passed by you. How could you expect him to see things as you see them? Let us do better than give way to indignation. Let us pray God to open his eyes and give him faith." And then, kneeling down together before the Holy Face, they offered a prayer of charity for the poor unbeliever.

M. Dupont could not even tolerate those slighter breaches of charity which good people will not seldom allow themselves at the expense of their neighbours in the shape of amusing comments on their peculiarities and manners. We have the following anecdote from an ecclesiastic who was present on the occasion.

One evening, a young religious, who was on his way through Tours, his native place, came to see his former friends of the nocturnal adoration, who, as usual, were conversing together before engaging in their devotions. With a view of making agreeable talk, the young man began describing in a whimsical way the reception he had met with from the canons and other ecclesiastics of the cathedral. M. Dupont, thinking that his remarks were too caustic to be altogether charitable, interrupted him by saying gently, "Eh! where, then, has the devil gone to hide himself? What is the good of leading a holy life, and wearing a hermit's frock, and then selling one's soul to the demon of satire and backbiting?" He was the first to laugh at his own sally, and every one did the same, including the subject of it. Then the conversation turned on other things.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## M. DUPONT'S HUMILITY AND LOVE OF MORTIFICATION.

IN speaking of the interior virtues of our holy man we must not omit his humility. It was the offspring of his faith. That faith, while it manifested to him the greatness of God, revealed to him the depth of his own nothingness. He was as one who had a constant vision of both. He accordingly held acts of humility in very high esteem, preferring them to the most splendid deeds. Convinced that pride and a spirit of independence was one of the great plagues of our time, he exerted himself to counteract it in the hearts of all over whom he had any influence by the cultivation of its opposite. To make oneself little and seek what is little was, according to him, one of the first principles of spirituality. Writing to a person who had asked his advice, he recommends him, while raising his thoughts to Heaven, to adopt as his weapons upon earth little things, and in little things that which is least. "Jesus," he says, "to save the world, made Himself little. Therefore, in order to save ourselves and others with us, we must make ourselves little. I know a person who accomplished a great work by devoting herself to the smallest things imaginable. One of these things was to kiss the steps of a staircase when no one saw her. Continually occupied with obtaining the conversion of a sister, she was always minded to work in a small and lowly way, rather like some vile insect than an animal of a higher grade. This leads us to think that the closer we cleave to our own nothingness the nearer do we approach to God,

for thereby we resume our primitive condition—a sublime state, wherein the Divine will met with no obstacle to be overcome.”

A pious young lady from Lyons complained to him one day of not being sufficiently detached and dead to herself. From a friend who was with her we learn his reply. “One excellent way,” he said, “of acquiring this death to self is to consider yourself as a person being carried to the grave. Of such a person we may say what we please, good or evil, it matters not to him ; he is insensible to everything, he hears nothing and answers nothing. Let us do the same when anything wounds us, and we feel a revolt of nature within us. Let us say, ‘It matters little what is said of me ; let people think what they will of me : *I am dead.*’ Then we recover our peace ; we let things pass, we are silent, and can say to ourselves with truth, ‘*I am dead.*’ So we are agreed about this : we three are dead ; let us kneel down and say three times the *De profundis*.” “From that day,” says the lady, “whenever we met he would begin and say, ‘Are you quite dead ?’ Whether or no, we must say our *De profundis*, that we may become as indifferent and insensible as if we were a corpse. Experience,” she adds, “has shown us the real efficacy of this practice, for as long as we continued it we felt our souls become detached and die to themselves and to all earthly things.”

What he recommended to others he practised himself. He had the most sincere contempt for himself, and nothing was more painful to him than when persons treated him with peculiar respect. He was quick to notice anything of the kind. A friend once applied to him in a letter a term which he judged too deferential. In his reply he said, “Do you observe that I have

added nothing to your name, either before or after it ? This is in order to compel you, when you next write to me, to choose some epithet more in proportion to my wretched deserts. You know well what the poor 'pilgrim' is, and you may imagine how heartily those who are thoroughly acquainted with him would laugh, as well they might, at the honour you pay him." He loved to make jokes about himself in this character of pilgrim. At one time he was the "pilgrim stuck in the mire," at another the "pilgrim of penance." "I hope," he writes to some one who had paid him a visit, "that God will permit me to see you again. In the meantime I shall feed on the recollection of your short stay here. I shall be the 'pilgrim chewing the cud,' a poor little creature which naturalists have not yet classified, for want of a microscope sufficiently powerful to discover its habits."

He had a horror of all that savoured of pomposity or that seemed to aim at effect, and with a gesture of repulsion would evince his contempt for it. This aversion to display was especially noticeable in all that was connected with the wonders of which his own *salon* was the scene, a personal share in which he was always so desirous to disclaim. It was curious to observe his look of annoyance when letters with laudatory addresses were brought to him ; such, for instance, as "M. Dupont in his chapel of the Holy Face, Tours," or "M. Dupont, Miracle-worker, Tours," or again, "M. Dupont, Physician, who cures by prayer, Tours." He used to destroy the envelopes at once, but his servants by stratagem contrived to get possession of some of them for the amusement of his friends. The Abbé Janvier had one in his possession, with a London post-mark, directed "M. Dupont, Tours, France ;" and then, on another line, "He who cures people."

One day a letter arrived which had considerably puzzled the officials at the Post Office. The sole address was, "To the Thaumaturgus of Tours." The postman who delivered letters in the Rue St. Etienne, guessed for whom it was meant, and took it to its destination. Upon this occasion M. Dupont was really amused, and kept repeating the word syllable by syllable, in an absurd and ridiculous tone, like a little child or an idiot who could not speak plain: *Thau—ma—tur—gus*. Sometimes persons who had heard of him, but did not know his name, would direct their letters, "To the great Physician." This, too, diverted him, and he would make fun of it; then, assuming a more serious air, he would say very earnestly, "Humanly speaking, our Lord could not have made a worse choice than by selecting me as His instrument. The wise men of this world would have taken care not to do that."

He courted obscurity as far as possible, and dreaded whatever might draw him into notice. Soon after the death of Mgr. de Montblanc, there was a report at Tours that the Bishop of Versailles had been appointed to replace him. This was no good news to this lover of retirement. "Mgr. de Versailles," he said, "is an intimate friend of mine; if he is made Archbishop of Tours I shall not be able to excuse myself from frequently seeing him, and that will be a great worry to a poor fellow like me, who am not fitted to frequent palaces." As the dreaded appointment never took place, he expressed himself grateful to Divine Providence for having so compassionately left him in his obscurity. He seldom went to the Archiepiscopal palace, and then only on business, never for a formal visit. Neither Cardinal Morlot nor Cardinal Guibert could

prevail on him to accept their invitations to dinner. Mgr. Morlot was at first very persevering in his attempts, but M. Dupont always contrived to find excellent reasons for declining the honour. At last his good mother pressed him so earnestly to accept an invitation which he had received, urging upon him that he could not with propriety refuse, that he yielded. But when the moment arrived for sitting down to table, it turned out that there was one place less than the number of guests. Immediately our holy man considered himself as the supernumerary, and seized the excuse to retire. Stepping behind the Archbishop, he whispered to him, "You see, Monseigneur, that I ought not to dine with great people, for there is no cover laid for me." By the time Mgr. de Morlot had cast his eye over the table and was giving his orders to supply the omission, M. Dupont had reached the bottom of the stairs, and when a servant was sent to recall him he was not to be found. Mgr. Guibert was not more successful, and he never appeared at the table of that prelate, even at the great solemnities of St. Martin, when the Commission of the Vestuary, of which, as we have seen, he was the president, were usually invited.

He willingly gave advice to persons who came to him and were suffering from any trouble or anxiety, for this is one of the works of mercy, but if he saw any disposition to regard him as a species of director, he instantly protested, saying, "My dear friend, I ought to hide myself out of the way in a dunghill, and keep there, instead of concerning myself with healthy souls." Again, if he observed that a particular value was being set on his words, or curiosity was manifested concerning his past life, as though there was something remarkable

about him, he became embarrassed, stopped short, confused and distressed, and shut himself up in a significant reserve. Never even with his relatives or intimate friends did he talk of any of the past events of his life which might have conduced to his credit. They knew his motive and respected it. Strangers would not always thus spare him, but would use complimentary language or address him in terms which shocked his humility. He did not scruple on such occasions to show his displeasure very plainly, either in words or by a grave silence. But when nothing would avail, for some of his encomiasts were not to be daunted, as a last resource he would turn the whole thing into a jest, as if the object of his flatterers had been to quiz him. No one ever saw a shade of ill-humour on M. Dupont's countenance except upon occasions of this kind, but it would not be just to attribute these rare manifestations to temper. They sprang, as is clear, from a very different cause, and a word often served to dissipate the passing cloud, which, indeed, was always under his control, being a weapon which he used in defence of his humility rather than anything else.

A devout lady, English by birth, Mme. Viot-Otter, who was constantly in and out of his house, joining in the prayers before the Holy Face, and making herself useful in applying the unctions where the aid of women was needed, venerated M. Dupont as a saint. She was nevertheless very free-spoken, and at times would indulge in a little banter at his expense. One day, she says, she found him, as was not usual with him, taciturn and gloomy, and what she called in a bad humour. To cheer him up, she said to him all of a sudden, but quite gravely, "M. Dupont, you are not

amiable to-day. That is very wrong of you. Take care, or some day it will stand in the way of your canonisation." This was irresistible; there was something to him so original and comic in the idea, that he burst into a hearty fit of laughter. "I had gained my point," adds the lady; "I had got him to relax."

It was a great mortification to him to be obliged, so long as he belonged to the Building Commission, to occupy a seat of honour in the cathedral. No sooner had he resigned than he utterly disappeared. "I discovered him at last," says a lady who knew him intimately, "at the lower end of the church, behind a pillar, among the Brothers of the Christian Schools; and, as I had noticed that when a Retreat was given or some devotional exercises were going on in one of the chapels, he invariably placed himself in the remotest corner, near a door, I remarked upon it, at the same time expressing my astonishment. "Do you think," he replied, "that I read the Gospel to no purpose? I do not wish, if I go too high, to have the Master telling me to move lower down. As it is, I make a good thing of it, for the last shall be first."

The same person observed that she could perceive only one defect in M. Dupont, and that was that, giving so largely as he did and knowing so well the art of giving, he did not know how to ask for anything. This kind of courage, she said, was wanting in him. But why? Because he asked for everything from God, who is the true Giver of all gifts. This is why his disinterestedness was equal to his humility; it was also akin to it, for it proceeded from genuine poverty of spirit. One day she arrived at M. Dupont's house just as a signal miracle had taken place. She



found him surrounded by the friends of the person who had been so marvellously cured. They evidently belonged to a class rich in this world's goods, and, in their excess of joy and gratitude for the mercy they had received, they were offering him all that he could need for his poor and for his different works of charity, and even earnestly pressing him to accept it. But, as usual, he refused everything. Nothing could move him from his determination. When these strangers were gone, "I said to him," continues the narrator, "'But, after all, why should you deprive yourself of such aid? Consider what good you might do with it. What a help it would be to you in so many good works you have at heart, especially for the assistance of those poor people whom you know and are interested about!'" "And the great Poor One, who is above? . . . And His glory?" he replied, pointing upwards with a gesture and an expression which I shall never forget, and which caused me a strange revulsion of feeling. "Money here!" he continued. "Never! There are alms-boxes in all the churches of Tours; let them go and pour their offerings into them!" The spirit of poverty which prompted these words had full possession of his heart. He had a good fortune of his own, but, as his income was derived from the colonies, it was uncertain, and he sometimes suffered considerable losses, but his equanimity was never disturbed. He put in practice the advice which he once gave to a rich person overtaken by similar disasters. "The zeal for good works which consumes you," he said, "would, did you not look at things with the eyes of faith, fill your soul with grief and trouble at the sight of the losses you have sustained. But you do well not to allow this thought

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to prevail. If God wills us to be poor, may His Holy Name be blessed. If He wills us to be rich, may His Holy Name again be blessed. But, between ourselves, let us confess the truth, and say, ‘Oh, what dangers do riches bring with them ! What a heavy weight is an income of eighty or a hundred thousand francs ! What a load will it be upon the conscience when God shall demand an account of it and inquire how we have spent it all !’ ‘I dread nothing so much as a fortune,’ a holy woman lately said to me, the mother of five young children. How much there is to learn and meditate upon in these few words !”

But to return to the subject of his humility. A contemporary writer of great ability, who knew M. Dupont well, and had made a particular study of his character, declares that it was his distinguishing feature. “With him,” he says, “the *I* had ceased to have any sensible existence. There are several kinds of humility. There is the humility of the man who looks at himself that he may despise himself, who struggles against the ever-reviving assaults of a self-love not wholly stifled ; and, again, there is the humility of the man who never gives a thought to himself at all. This second kind of humility was that of M. Dupont. Many persons say with their lips that they are nothing, but their hearts and their outward behaviour contradict their speech. You feel that in their own eyes they are something, and in the secret of their hearts very much : humility is often but an empty formula. As for M. Dupont, humility was his life ; he was humble even as he drew his breath, and this humility of his was perfectly simple. There is a pretentious humility—a strange and pitiable thing. A man may be vain of not being vain ; he may pretend to be free from all

pretension. But in M. Dupont humility never contemplated itself ; it was absolutely simple."

The writer just quoted was present once when a lady had the exceedingly bad tact to call M. Dupont a saint in addressing him. "It would be difficult," he said, "to describe the way in which this indiscreet speech was received. It was nothing like the false modesty of one who disclaims a compliment which he cannot with propriety accept ; it was a displeasure so profound that no one would have wished to face it a second time. 'In the works done here,' he said, 'I am the obstacle.' And he thoroughly believed what he said. After a while he added, 'If we were all put into a mill and ground, naught but mud would come out. Nothing,' he continued, 'prevents the sun from rising and setting, because it has no will of its own ; but as for man, he obstructs everything. God acts only on nothingness. When man resists, God is thwarted and brought to a standstill.' Every day he offered this short and simple prayer : 'From the desire of being consulted, deliver me, O Lord' ; and his prayer was granted. His room was never free from pilgrims, but people might come from the other end of the earth, he might receive the most flattering attentions from persons whose very visit was in itself a flattery—he was invulnerable. Or they might stay away, neglect him, forget him ; they might do what they would, pay him attention or no attention, it was impossible to touch his self-love. He might be said to have put his self-love under an exhausted receiver ; there was no air for it to breathe ; of all that was said not a sound could reach it."

The same witness adds, that in speaking to M. Dupont it was necessary to abstain from showing

him any personal consideration. Worldly politeness wearied him. "I beg pardon," he says, "for mentioning the following trifling incident, but it is so perfectly characteristic of the man that it has an interest for me. I was dining with him one day. His mother was still alive at the time, and was present. I was in my travelling dress, and began apologising for the state of my coat, which had come straight from the railway. No sooner, however, had I opened my mouth than M. Dupont interrupted me, saying, 'Life is too short for us to talk about that;' but I wish I could reproduce the tone and manner in which he said it. In approaching M. Dupont, the one thing to be thought of must be prayer. He had a horror of the social self, and ill-treated it in others after destroying it in himself. He admitted all who came; but, unless you directly asked him for his prayers, you might remain in his house without his taking any notice of you. He never so much as looked at you unless he perceived that you wanted his help. You might come in and you might go out, he never dreamed either of receiving you or of accompanying you to the door. In short, he was not at home. This room was the room of prayer: that was all."

He never wearied of saying, "This is Paganism: *Me, me, adsum qui feci*—It is I, it is I who did it. This is Christianity: *Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit in me Christus*—I live, but not I; it is Christ who liveth in me."

His interior peace was, doubtless, a gift, but nothing seems ever to have troubled even the surface of his soul. He had, as it were, merited this exemption by making it a duty to be cheerful. "The

devil," he used to say, "is the prince of weariness. In vain may he take to turning tables; he is as tired as a dog. We ought to be cheerful." As for his external tranquillity, this is how he explained it. "I see people," he said, "who are tormented and worried by others because their mode of life is not that of the rest of the world. This seems to be because these people are something; no one dreams of troubling or worrying me; I am nothing. How can you worry what is nothing? Try to take nothing between your fingers and bruise it." And then he made as if he were endeavouring to crush something between his fingers, and were not able to do it, because there was nothing there to crush.

M. Dupont set a high value on bodily mortification and penance. The Superioress of a convent at Saint-Servan testified that from his earliest visits to that watering-place, which began not long after he settled at Tours, he was remarked as a man of austere virtue and endowed with a rare spirit of recollection in prayer. Every night he used to keep what is called the "holy hour," and endeavoured to propagate that pious practice. In Lent and on fasting days he ate nothing till mid-day, when his meal consisted of a single dish, and for his collation he took only a little raw salad. On Ash-Wednesday he ate bread baked under the ashes; on Good Friday and Holy Saturday he did not break his fast until six o'clock in the evening.

The slightest bodily suffering or inconvenience was food to his spirit of mortification, and he was careful to turn it to his soul's profit. We have seen his love of small things, and this predilection he carried into his acts of self-denial and mortification, for it does not

follow that mortification in a small thing is a small mortification, while it has this advantage, that it furnishes no pabulum to secret pride. Of this nature was a sacrifice which he imposed on himself, slight, indeed, in appearance, but which will not be so regarded by those who have experienced the difficulty of conquering such habits. From his youth, M. Dupont had indulged in a practice, almost universal in the colonies, of taking snuff. In the year 1868 he resolved to renounce it. "Would you believe it?" he writes to his friend and countryman, M. d'Avrainville, who had contracted the same habit; "after forty-nine years of excessive indulgence in snuff, I have discarded my snuff-box! Next Saturday it will be twenty-eight days since I gave it up, and I feel not the slightest desire to resume it."

He sedulously concealed his greater austerities and penitential practices. He was always dressed with a scrupulous regard to cleanliness and even neatness, and none of his friends or acquaintances could have suspected that one of his gentlemanlike, not to say dignified manners, gave himself the discipline as unsparingly as any cloistered monk. Even his servants were kept in ignorance. One person alone was aware of it during his lifetime: this was Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Prioress of the Carmelites, with whom, on account of her age, her eminent virtue, and the confidence he placed in her, he was quite unreserved; yet even she had to employ all her address to extract his secret from him. It is from her that we learn that, after what he called his conversion, he used every day, before betaking himself to rest, or at midnight, when he rose from his bed to keep the holy hour, to perform this penitential exercise. On her inquiring how he

managed not to be overheard by his household, he explained that on one side of the *salon*, in which at that time he slept, there was a small room into which he could retire at any time of the day or night to “practise his devotions.” He procured a hair-shirt from the Mother Prioress, and from her testimony it appears that he was familiar with all the instruments of penance used in monasteries. An iron discipline belonging to him was found after his death, and it may now be seen hanging up in the Sacristy of the Oratory, in the part called the Chamber of Miracles, with this inscription: “Here the servant of God mortified his flesh by prolonged flagellations even unto blood. *Castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo.*” We are assured by one on whose word full reliance may be placed that, when alone in a railway carriage, he would give himself the discipline in a spirit of reparation to expiate the sins committed on the railway. Thus we see that he practised corporal penance with the double object of keeping the flesh in subjection and making reparation for the sins of others.

To those who were afflicted with sadness and distressing temptations he strongly recommended these penitential exercises. “You alone,” he writes to one who had opened his heart to him on the subject and asked his advice, “you alone can do yourself any good. There is a remedy, and, to be afraid of it, one can never have seriously tried it. I speak of corporal penance. ‘I chastise my body and bring it into subjection,’ \* said the great Apostle, and with good reason, because our Lord had not consented to deliver him from his temptation. Reasoning leads to nothing; the body

\* 1 Cor. ix. 27.



is the animal part, to which words have no meaning. It is blows that are wanted ; the discipline, taken with humility and the absence of any motive save that of punishing self, speedily repairs the powers of the soul and, so to say, restores to it its dignity. The body stoops under the yoke and confesses the baseness of its extraction. You will soon find peace with yourself, having your eyes henceforth fixed on Heaven." His friend, however, did not relish the prescription, and so we find M. Dupont in another letter insisting on its efficacy. " I am grieved to see," he says, " that you go on seeking counsels and explanations about your spiritual state. Believe me, you do wrong to shrink from adopting the means which I thought well to suggest to you in my former letter. Penance ! Penance ! that would bring joy to your heart, and admit you to the friendship of our Lord." And again, " Vainly may you plead that you have already suffered much. Oh, if you did but know the value of one act of voluntary suffering ! I pray God to grant you abundant light with respect to this matter. St. Paul chastised his body, all the saints to this day have done the same. The evil is greater than people imagine. They who love their flesh are many in number, and they are strongly inclined to believe that the sufferings of Calvary suffice. They reason themselves into the belief that it is quite needless to imitate the saints in their treatment of the flesh. But it is very evident, from what at this moment is passing before our eyes, that our Lord desires to bring us back into the only way of salvation, namely, penance, which He Himself first underwent in order to give us the example."

Besides his penitential exercises, which M. Dupont

performed at stated times, the life which he led during the whole day might be regarded as one long act of penance. Comfort, ease, and what is called recreation found no place in it, while the bodily repose which nature imperatively claims never exceeded what was strictly necessary, if it might not be said to stop short of that limit. He rose very early, winter and summer alike—as soon, in short, as he awoke, which was commonly at two or three o'clock in the morning; he then made his meditation and prayer; after which he went to Mass and communicated. On his return home, he stationed himself between the Holy Face and the Holy Bible, and there, kneeling or sitting, he spent the day engaged in those supernatural occupations which have been described, except that in the afternoon, until his infirmities disabled him, he usually went out to devote himself to different pious works, going regularly every Sunday evening, and frequently also during the week, to see the Little Sisters of the Poor and their old people; he used also to visit the workwomen of the Vestuary of St. Martin. In these two houses, which regarded him quite as their Providence, he was never called anything but “the good father Dupont;” but it was a well understood thing that he would not endure to be thanked for any act of kindness, far less praised.

Such was his habitual life, at least during his last twenty-eight years, as testified by one who knew him well during that period, a life of prayer and self-sacrifice. It must not be supposed, however, that M. Dupont attained such eminent perfection without effort or struggle. This was by no means the case. So far from being averse to pleasure, his temperament inclined him to an ardent love of it. As a boy, he led the way in all the games of his age, and in youth, as

we have seen, he was passionately fond of horses and gay equipages, of dancing and every kind of field-sport. By nature he was lively, impetuous, joyous, self-willed even to obstinacy; of this he bore through life the visible mark in the deformed thumb which had been crushed in the gate of Chissay. He did not readily yield to others, and desired to be foremost and to excel in everything. All these harsh elements in his character, which by God's grace were brought into entire subjection, did not altogether disappear after the conversion of his heart to God, but would manifest themselves occasionally by a sort of asperity in controversy. Virtue, in short, was in the holy man of Tours, as it has been in all the saints, the triumph of grace. His merit was that of having faithfully corresponded to it, not suffering its slightest movements to be lost upon him, but making profit of all. Hence the perfection of his victory over self, a victory so complete that he became, while still retaining his characteristic individuality, remarkable for the very qualities most opposed to his natural imperfections.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### M. DUPONT'S SPECIAL DEVOTIONS.

THE lamp does not burn without oil. If M. Dupont's interior virtues gave forth so steady and splendid a light, it was because they were fed by continual prayer. He may be said to have been always praying, for, if not engaged in some act of devotion, his mind was always in the attitude of prayer, his eye fixed on

God, his ear open to the whisperings of grace. It was beautiful to see him at his prayers, observed the Superioress of a Convent, and she and her community used often to contemplate him with admiration while thus engaged. His countenance and whole bearing at those times, she said, spoke at once of his humility and of his profound sense of the Majesty of God. When he thought himself to be alone, and particularly when making the Stations, he would extend his arms in the form of a cross, and perform other external acts of fervent devotion and humiliation. He exceedingly loved the prayers of the Liturgy, desiring to follow the Church in every step he took, and to live in close union with her. This habit—a pity that it should be so rare!—has been already noticed. We may here add, that so completely was his soul steeped, as it were, in her spirit, that if, on leaving the church after Mass, he met a priest of his acquaintance, or some pious, well-informed layman, he would salute him by quoting the Introit, or Collect, or Post-Communion, or he would recall some trait of the Saint's life whom the Church honoured that day. All that related to the Passion of our Lord and to His Sacred Heart was most dear to him. On his arrival at Tours he joined the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart established in the parish of the cathedral, and we find him, as early as the year 1854, speaking of that beautiful devotion as a pledge of salvation and a motive of unshaken confidence. He believed that all the graces with which the earth was inundated flowed from that Adorable Heart, through the intervention of Mary. Thus he beheld in this mystery a sort of extension of the mystery of the Incarnation. "Mary," he said, "must intervene through her

Immaculate Heart in this last effort of love to revive extinct faith, as our Lord announced to Margaret Mary Alacoque."

He remarked that when St. Gertrude, who died in the year 1260, foretold this future *cultus* of the Sacred Heart, she observed to St. John that he had made no mention of it in his Gospel. To which the Evangelist replied, "This revelation is reserved for modern times, that, by hearkening to the pulsations of this Divine Heart, the world, already growing cold, may have the love of God rekindled within it." In the wonderful connection subsisting between the revelations of St. Gertrude and those of Margaret Mary he saw the strongest encouragement for hope amid the conflicts now raging in the world. "For three centuries," he said, "humanity has wallowed in its own reasonings, and at the end has found itself immersed in a pestilential sewer. At that moment, all astonished, it hears those words: '*Hora est jam nos de somno surgere.*'\*" It is no longer, alas! a question of awaking, or, at least, the slumber in which the mass of mankind is plunged is that of Lazarus, and it is a question really of a resurrection. God can accomplish it; Mary asks it; let us have confidence."

It is scarcely necessary to advert to his filial devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, as his whole life bears testimony to it. It will be recollected how he sought out her sanctuaries, visiting, as a pilgrim, all her desecrated and deserted shrines. Over the chimney-piece in his room might be seen a tablet, inclosed in a frame, on which he had registered from time to time the name of each holy place and the date of his visit. The series formed a singular kind of Litany, the recital

\* "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep."—Rom. xiii. 11.

of which was pleasing to the heart of the old pilgrim of Mary. Opposite the door, on the garden side, was a recess, in which he had placed a small wooden image of the Blessed Virgin, under the title of Our Lady of Good Hope. He often visited it, and took care that it should always be surrounded with flowers and greenery. This image was a memorial of his pilgrimage to La Salette.

Ever since he settled in Tours, he had paid particular honour to an image known as that of Our Lady of Miracles, which was venerated in the chapel of the House of Refuge of the Good Shepherd. This miraculous Madonna was formed of oak, and was older than the time of St. Louis. It had fully vindicated its claim to the title of "miraculous," and M. Dupont himself obtained the cure of several sick persons by means of the oil of its lamp. This was previous to the miracles of the Holy Face, and may possibly have suggested to him the idea of seeking similar supernatural favours by applications of the oil burning before it.

With the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary he loved to associate that of the holy Patriarch St. Joseph, for whom he had a special devotion, and on whose intercession he placed the utmost reliance. Even where the case was not one of urgent necessity, he would apply to him with every confidence of being heard; and the following curious example may be regarded as a proof that St. Joseph is not displeased with petitions of this character, even when to some they might appear not a little unreasonable. M. Dupont was in the habit on certain festal occasions of giving a little supper to the old men of the Little Sisters of the Poor. They reckoned much

upon these entertainments, looking forward to them with the eager impatience of children. One of the approaching days unfortunately found their generous benefactor very low in his finances, and he was obliged to tell them that for his part he was quite unable to provide them with their usual treat, but that there was St. Joseph, who could well do it; and he recommended their addressing themselves to this good patron of the Little Sisters, and making a novena to him that he might send them fowls and turkeys for the customary feast. "Why not ask for a wild boar?" exclaimed several voices at once. Why a wild boar? The request seemed rather preposterous to M. Dupont, but the old men stuck to it, and so he consented. Accordingly, every day the prayers of the novena were offered with this intention, in which the servant of God joined with none the less fervour because he could not help laughing and making a little fun of the strange idea which these old people had taken up of asking St. Joseph for a wild boar. Strange, indeed, it was, and apparently absurd; nevertheless, on the eve of the feast, which was the day before the novena was to end, a railway porter suddenly presented himself at M. Dupont's house and bade him throw open his great gates, as a waggon was outside containing a wild boar. At the same time he handed him a letter. It was from a friend in the country. "I, who am a very indifferent shot," he wrote, "have, by I know not what happy good-luck, shot a wild boar in my woods. As I am here by myself, and cannot possibly eat a whole wild boar, it has occurred to me that it might be of use for your poor, so I send it you." It may be readily imagined how welcome was the present, but what pen could



describe the rapturous delight of the old men or the ardour with which they blessed St. Joseph for having granted their request?

Devotion to St. Teresa was naturally allied with that to St. Joseph, of whom she was so fervent a client; but the great reformer of the Carmel was dear to him also on many other accounts. He studied her writings with a holy avidity, learning the secrets of the sublimest prayer in her school. He always carried about him what goes by the name of "St. Teresa's little letter,"\* and with it, as we have seen, a little print of the Saint, at the back of which he had written down the date and the different phases of what he called his conversion, but which we may rather regard as the several steps by which he advanced in the way of evangelical perfection and the spiritual life.

It was the *cultus* of the Sacred Heart which first drew M. Dupont to St. Gertrude. He used to read with deep interest the works of that illustrious Benedictine, and was much attracted by the different devotional practices which she recommends and teaches. Especially he loved to repeat the beautiful words with which she saluted the Wounds of our Lord, and he induced pious souls to do the same. Once, when at Havre, he had a little work in her honour printed, in the frontispiece of which she was represented pointing to her heart, wherein Jesus was seated on a throne, with these words, which the Saviour once pronounced: "You will find me in the heart of Gertrude." It was impossible but that the holy man should have loved a saint so marvellously dear to Jesus; her very name—he

\* "Let nothing trouble thee. Let nothing alarm thee. Everything passes away. God never changes. Patience gets everything. He who possesses God wants nothing. God alone is sufficient."

himself says it—sent a thrill through his heart, and when her feast day came round, he could not contain himself for joy. To one who shared this devotion we find him writing, “I must at least say one short word to you this evening before St. Gertrude’s day closes. But, instead of writing, we ought to see each other, that we might converse together about this great saint, whom we have done so well to choose as our special patroness. How many graces are attached to the loving homage we can pay to one who was the living tabernacle of Jesus!” And again, “Let us lovingly salute this prophetess of the Sacred Heart, this loving confidante of Jesus, who has told us all His secrets. O Gertrude! help us to pronounce with our hearts and with our lips that invocation which burst from thy soul, all inflamed at the mere recital of the blasphemies of the Pretorium: ‘I salute Thee, O my Jesus, life-giving pearl of the excellence of God; I salute Thee, incorruptible flower of human nature!’ Our Lord vouchsafed to say to thee that all who, after thy example, shall thus salute Him when they hear any blasphemies uttered, shall be rewarded for their zeal in defending the glory of God. We beseech thee, then, to aid us, O amiable virgin, our dear patroness, to feel as thou didst the insults addressed to God, and to combat them with thy cry of love: ‘I salute Thee, my Jesus, life-giving pearl.’”

He also paid especial honour to his patron, St. Leo the Great. To a friend, an associate of the Nocturnal Adoration, who, on the occasion of his feast day, had promised to pray for him, he replied, “It must have been my guardian angel or my holy patron who inspired you with the thought of praying for me. That great Doctor of the Church is indeed the patron of

your poor brother of the Adoration. I have but one patron; but, as God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, I am able to keep the feast of St. Leo several times a year, and, to say the truth, I charge every one of them with the care of my salvation." Once, when the feast of this great Pope occurred during the Easter solemnities, he said in reply to one who had offered his congratulations, "How good of you to remind me so appropriately that the feast of my holy patron coincides this year with the *Alleluia* of the Resurrection! But this is not all: it remains for you to obtain me the grace of rising again by freeing myself entirely from the old man, and I rely on your prayers to this end."

With the great Pope, who was the terror of the barbarians and the protector of Rome, he united in his thoughts St. Michael, the defender of the Church. He was minded to have a figure made of the Archangel overthrowing the dragon, who was to be represented as chained, but he had some difficulty as to whether the dragon should have one head or many. He objected to their multiplicity, and thought one would be better. The chain could not bind all the heads, he said, and there would be a doubt as to the manner in which St. Michael had accomplished his work if it bound only one. Hercules might be left to destroy the hydra's heads one after the other, but the Archangel spoke but one word when he vanquished the enemy: "*Mi-chael*?—who is like to God?"

His devotion to St. Anthony of Padua showed itself particularly in the use he made of him, as common among Catholics, for finding things which had been lost or mislaid. He never failed to have recourse to him on what would be called the most trivial occasions,

and advised others to do the same. For instance, we find him writing to a good lady who was lamenting her lost spectacles, "Pray to St. Anthony of Padua, and you will find your glasses;" which, no doubt, she did. Among many equally curious circumstances the following is worth recording. In the year 1841 the servant of God was travelling from Tours to Mans, when he found himself in company with the same Sister Francis Xavier who has been already mentioned. On reaching Mans, M. Dupont accompanied her to the house of her community; when the Superioress inquired after her luggage. Certainly she had a trunk, but where was it? M. Dupont made inquiry at the office of the *diligence*, but it was not there. The Sister's embarrassment was great, for she was to leave early the next morning for Havre, whence she was to embark for America. "Never mind," said the holy man. "I will pray to St. Anthony, and do you pray also." The great gate was then closed, and the Sisters retired for the night. At five o'clock, when the portress went to open it, there, to her astonishment, stood the lost trunk inside the enclosure, close to the gate, which still remained locked. No one had rung at the bell; no one had opened the gate; no one had come in. M. Dupont, however, felt no surprise; to him it was the most natural thing in the world: St. Anthony had looked after the trunk while they had been occupied with our Lord, for all the time of their journey had been spent in prayer and in converse about God.

But M. Dupont also begged St. Anthony's help for an object not so usual, and he earnestly recommended this practice to his friends. It was for the recovery of lost graces—graces which had been allowed to pass unheeded, or, if received, had been carelessly wasted

and forfeited. In the year 1846 he invited several pious persons and, among others, Mme. des Hayes, a Religious of the Sacré Cœur, to join in a novena to the saint for this intention. "We can never know," he wrote, "how much a true sentiment of faith is capable of effecting in the search for lost graces ;" and he begged one of his god-daughters, who, he feared, was in danger of contracting a dangerous intimacy, to make a novena in honour of St. Anthony that she might meet with a good and pious soul with whom she could form a salutary friendship.

He also placed the greatest confidence in St. Francis of Assisi. Two circumstances especially attracted him to this saint : his stigmata, which recalled to him the Five Wounds of the crucified God, and, in particular, His pierced Heart, and that prayer, called the "Benediction of St. Francis," borrowed from Scripture, in which the Holy Face is twice mentioned. He frequently used this prayer, and had it printed separately for distribution. He carried it about him, and treated it with great respect, pressing it to his lips and pronouncing, with a rapturous delight, each of the three parts of which it was composed. He had a special predilection for the second, which makes mention of the Son, and which seemed to him to contain the whole essence of the devotion to the Holy Face : "*Ostendat Faciem suam tibi, et misereatur tui.*—May He show His Face to thee, and have pity on thee." He used it freely when suffering from gout and paralysis, as being a sovereign remedy against impatience. "This benediction," he said, "is fitted for every battle against the old enemy, who still, as in the time of Job, inflicts paralysis, leprosy, and all those other maladies which make us sigh continually after our heavenly country,

when we are attacked by them." He was always very desirous to secure the precious indulgence of the Portiuncula, and, for that purpose, never failed to visit Notre Dame-la-Riche, the only Church in Tours where, at that period, it could be gained. In 1860 he records that he had never missed this devotion for five-and-twenty years, as neither had his poor mother, whom he had just lost.

He had great devotion also to the mother of the great St. Augustine. "The world," he said, "is full of sorrowing mothers and wives; I recommend to you the Litany of St. Monica. When the Association of Christian Mothers was instituted and placed under her patronage, and he saw it established at Tours, he rejoiced with all his heart, and expected that great benefit to families would be the result. "The institution of the Christian Mothers," he wrote to a friend in 1856, "will make a new breach in the citadel of Satan."

Devotion to St. Philomena had formerly been very popular at Tours and in other cities of France, as well as of Italy, and it will be remembered what special devotion was paid to her by the Curé of Ars, who loved to impute to his dear patroness the miracles and supernatural graces which others attributed to himself. M. Dupont, after his example, eagerly adopted this devotion, and had several pretty images of the saint, one of which stood on his chimneypiece, and another on the piece of furniture under the Holy Face.

He rendered especial honour to all the local patrons, a saintly instinct one might call it, so constantly is it to be met with in very holy souls. We have seen the zeal with which he was animated for the great St. Martin, who, although the property of France and of

the whole Christian world, was still the peculiar glory of Tours, and, being such, our holy man entertained all the more fervent veneration for him. With St. Martin he associated St. Gatian, the first apostle of Touraine, under whose shadow, indeed, he almost dwelt, for the Rue St. Etienne was in the parish which bore his name. He loved to contemplate the ancient and beautiful cathedral dedicated to him, and when gout rendered him a prisoner, he would seat himself on a bench at the end of his garden, from which he could gaze on its two stately towers, and, as he gazed, his heart was elevated to God, and his mind dwelt on the thought of the faithful generation which had erected them to the glory of the holy bishop.

St. Francis of Paula, another patron of Tours, also shared his homage. It dated from the long stay which his friend and confessor, the Canon Pasquier, made at the ancient monastery of Plessis-les-Tours. With him, and other like-minded priests, he used often to go and pray at the tomb of the founder of the Minims, once a place of frequent pilgrimage, but now deserted. So long as he was able to walk, he never omitted paying it a visit on the 2nd of April, the feast-day of the saint. This tomb, once so famous, was now marked only by a simple cross of wood. M. Dupont was among the first to contemplate the restoration of the old church and the renewal of the pilgrimage, as in former days. Meanwhile, he begged the favour of erecting, at his own expense, a cross more worthy of the blessed spot; and this was done in accordance with his directions, but with so much secrecy that few ever knew from whom the donation came.

We have already seen what devotion he cherished for the Saints of the Old Law, whom he had learned to



know and love from his assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures. It was his habit to invoke them at special times and under special circumstances, calling to mind their words, their actions, and their virtues. He honoured in particular the holy ancestors of Mary and of the Incarnate Word, St. Anne and St. Joachim ; and he would say in his simple way, blending natural with supernatural feelings, "Grandfathers and grandmothers are so proud of the success of their children, and thus we may well believe that these august ancestors of our Lord have benedictions in store for those who from age to age come to compliment them about Mary and Jesus."

M. Dupont had a very tender devotion to the holy angels, and especially to his own guardian angel, to whom he looked, not for protection only, but for guidance and direction. His confidence in the latter was much increased by a little incident which made a strong impression on his mind. The circumstance is reported by a friend, who, when walking with M. Dupont one day along the Rue des Ursulines, observed that, on reaching a particular spot facing a little street, he raised his hat respectfully, as if saluting some one. There being no one in sight, his friend asked for whom that salutation was intended, whereupon M. Dupont replied that it was for his guardian angel ; and, on being pressed for further explanation, he related how, one day, when passing that way and occupied with turning over the leaves of a little book on devotion to our guardian angels, which had just been given him, he read these words : "Whenever we are inspired with a good thought, we must take care not to neglect it, for to do so is an affront to our good angel." Just then he suddenly remarked a countryman, attired like

a farmer in his Sunday's best, coming down the little street. The idea immediately crossed his mind of giving him an alms, but, seeing that there was no look of want about him, his second impulse was to put the thought aside. Nevertheless the interior movement to give the good man something still continued, and, applying to himself the passage he had been reading, he took from his purse a small piece of money, and walked towards the stranger. At the same time he so little expected a good reception that, fearful of receiving a blow from the stick which the man carried, he held himself in readiness to slip away. To his surprise, the stranger stopped and informed him that he had just lost his purse, and, as he knew nobody in Tours, he had been sorely puzzled how he should be able to get a meal before going back to his home, which was quite at the other extremity of the Department. "But," he added, "how could you possibly know of my embarrassment?" Then M. Dupont pointed to the passage in the book, and changed the coin he had offered for one of more value. The worthy man, however, declared he would only accept it as a loan; and M. Dupont bade him acquit himself of his debt by giving the money to the poor. "Ever since that day," he said, "I never fail to salute my good angel when I pass this way."

His heart was so full of confidence in the protection of the holy angels, that a word from him on the subject, simple as it might be, would produce a wonderful and lasting effect on others. A lady relates that, when quite a young woman, she had a desire to go and rejoin her husband, who was with his regiment in Africa; but that she greatly dreaded having to make so long a journey alone, and, meeting M. Dupont in the street,

stopped to tell him of her fears and to ask his advice. Immediately, in a tone of confidence, and with an air of dignity which she could never forget, he replied, "But, Madam, you will not be alone. Do you forget your guardian angel? Go, go, without fear." And she did go, fortified and encouraged, and made a prosperous journey. "The remembrance of these few words," she said, "may seem a trifling thing, but they left an impression on my mind of the presence of my angel guardian which has never been effaced."

With what a lively faith M. Dupont relied on the protecting care of the good angels is shown by an incident which a lady relates as having occurred during her youth. Her father had been much afraid that she might wish to enter religion, and for that reason was always watching her, and did not allow her to go to confession more than twice in the year, himself selecting the confessor. One Christmas Eve, he had taken her to the cathedral, where she was to make her confession to the Abbé Manceau. After a while her father, feeling the cold, whispered to her that he was going home for his cloak, but would return immediately. He was no sooner gone than the poor girl was seized with an irrepressible desire, despite her fears of her father's displeasure, to run and see the Carmelite nuns, whose convent was close by. She made but a short stay, nevertheless on her return she was startled to find that her father was already back and was standing exactly opposite the chapel where the Abbé was hearing confessions. He was evidently looking for her. What was she to do? To regain her former place, she must needs pass in front of him; he would guess where she had been, and his anger would know no bounds. She stood, not daring to advance; when,

perceiving M. Dupont praying in a corner, she went and acquainted him with her dilemma. "Do not fear," he said gently; "ask his good angel to shut his eyes, and he will not see you." Upon this, trembling, as she said, like a leaf, she approached her father, and said, "Have a little patience; my turn will soon come, and I shall not be long." The holy man had spoken truly: his good angel had joined with her father's in closing his eyes; he did not see her till she spoke, and supposed she had come to him from the chapel.

In the intimate relations of one soul with another, M. Dupont made much account of the intervention of their good angels. He used to charge the angels of those who had done him any kindness to make them sensible of his gratitude. Many of his letters written to friends are headed with a salutation to their good angels. In one he writes, "I salute your dear angel, my dear friend, and I beg him to unite with mine in making us both fulfil in all things the holy will of God. If your wife's good angel will join ours, that will be grand." Another of his devotional practices was to beg the good angels to lead him up to the Holy Table. Latterly, when he was seldom able to communicate, he composed the following prayer, headed "Sighs of a soul deprived of daily communion:"—"Good angel, dear object of my affection, deny me not the aid of thy powerful intervention, but help me to transport myself in body and soul to the foot of every altar throughout the world at the moment when the Holy Sacrifice is commemorated, that I may collect with my tongue any particles of the Host that may have fallen to the ground at the time of Holy Communion."

The Scriptures suggested to him many pious con-

siderations concerning the holy angels. He would say, for instance, that we have full right to apply to ourselves the encouraging words which Eliseus spoke to his servant when he tremblingly announced to him that the town was surrounded by enemies: "Fear not, for there are more with us than with them;" at the same time beseeching God to open the eyes of Giezi, who "beheld the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Eliseus."\* In like manner, he believed that we ought always to fortify ourselves with the thought that our holy guardian angels are both able and willing to do us greater good than the bad angels can do us harm. In regard to the petitions for prayers which he did not always register with the full particularity that might be desired, he declared his conviction that the angels knew and understood marvellously well all the details which for lack of time he might have omitted. He did not like the way in which pious persons would endeavour, as it were, to detain some beloved soul on earth when these emissaries had come to fetch it. Speaking of a certain Religious, he said, "When the angels come for such holy souls, we are very weak in our efforts to resist them. We say, in our poor feeble language, like the people of Joppe around the body of Dorcas,† 'Behold her good works; we cannot afford to lose her.' But in Heaven the saints are much more powerful, and often the angels take no heed to our prayers, and carry out their mission. In quitting this world, all the saints may say with our Lord, 'It is expedient for you that I go.'‡"

M. Dupont, it scarcely need be said, had a great devotion to the holy souls in Purgatory. He was continu-

\* 4 Kings vi. 17.

† Acts ix. 36-39.

‡ St. John xvi. 7.

ally offering his communions for them, and, in doing so, was in the habit of saying interiorly, "*Portio mea in terra viventium*—My portion is in the land of the living." A touching circumstance in connection with this practice of his is worth relating. A lady of Tours, with whom he was intimately acquainted, had died. On the following day, as he was leaving the church, he met her daughter, and said to her in a low voice, and with a countenance as it were transfigured with joy, "I have been offering my communion for your dear mother, but you cannot imagine how confused I was. At the moment when the priest placed the Sacred Host on my tongue, I felt It separate in two parts. Many thoughts presented themselves to my mind, and, while I was thinking of offering for the dear departed the part which I designed for her, she seemed to appear before me, with her hands full of gold, as if to say to me, 'I am richer than you.' As I sought to penetrate more deeply into the impression which I had received, I thought I heard her pronounce the words: 'My portion is in the land of the living.' Oh, how great was my joy! Yes, the dead who die in the Lord go to the land of the living, and it is we, alas! who are in the land of the dying, that land where we are every instant exposed to the danger of losing God and dying eternally."

The thought of death was ever present to his mind, and the consideration of the future life and of a blessed eternity had a most powerful influence in supernaturalising even his smallest actions. With him they had all a religious and an exalted aim. It was his fashion always to wear black; for the same reason, no doubt, which he assigned to a friend for never using any but black sealing-wax or wafers. "I wear the mourning of sinners, as every Christian

ought to do ;” and on some one who was not a Christian asking him for whom he was in mourning, he replied, with a startling frankness, “I am in mourning for you. For it is written, ‘The mourning for the dead is seven days ; but for a fool and an ungodly man all the days of their life.’” \* It was not, therefore, in sorrow for the loss of a relative that he habitually wore black, for, as the Abbé Janvier remarks, death in his eyes was life, and instead of weeping over his loved ones, he rejoiced in their happiness, while waiting for re-union.

One favourite practice he had which he specially recommended to his friends. We find a mention of it in a letter to one of his god-daughters. “I have every reason to expect,” he writes, “that I shall be the first who is called to judgment. Alas ! I know it is a momentous business, and that at such a moment we invoke, like Job, the assistance of our friends. I must tell you at the same time one of my devotions, borrowed from St. Teresa, and I would beg you to adopt it for your own use whenever occasion offers. The saint, on hearing of the death of one of her old friends, exclaimed, ‘Lord, if in the course of my whole life I have done any good thing, apply it to this soul ;’ and at the same instant she understood that the beautiful soul for which she had interceded was ascending into Heaven.”

His tender charity to the departed was shown in his custom of accompanying their bodies to the grave. Whenever he met a funeral train, he would turn and follow it, walking bareheaded with his rosary in his hand ; and this quite irrespectively of the class in life to which the deceased had belonged. The poor and

\* Ecclus. xxii. 13.



lowly, however, had the strongest attraction for him ; indeed, he deemed it a positive duty to pray for those who had so few to remember and assist them.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### LAST YEARS OF M. DUPONT.

“M. DUPONT lived in a supernatural element,” observes the Abbé Janvier. “In heart and mind he dwelt in closest union with God, and in the perpetual society of angels and saints. The practice of the interior virtues, his indefatigable application to prayer, the pious exercises of all kinds to which he devoted himself, according as he was moved by circumstances or by any present need,—all this formed around him a sort of heavenly atmosphere, the influence of which was felt by every one who approached him. His reputation was great and extended far. People came to him from all parts and from various motives—the sick to be healed, the afflicted to be consoled, the curious to study and know the man, serious-minded persons to seek edification and instruction, others simply to ask his prayers and to hear from him a word about God, a word of encouragement or of light in their difficulties and their doubts.” The same writer says that there was, perhaps, not a single work of zeal or charity which had taken its rise in France during the last thirty years with which M. Dupont was not directly or indirectly connected ; not a single man of God of any note who had not in some way or on some occasion established relations with him.

But it was not merely persons famous in the

religious world who held communication with him. "Providence," observes M. Aubineau, "had ordered circumstances so as to place him in connection with souls the most hidden and unknown—those who lived in the retirement of the cloister, and those whom their obscure lot in the world veiled entirely from observation. He was in relations of prayer with Marie-Eustelle Harpain, that humble sempstress of Saint-Palais, near Saintes, of whose existence scarcely any one beyond the precincts of that place was aware during her whole life, or even after her death, until his Eminence Cardinal Villecourt published her marvellous writings." After alluding to his friendship with the Capitaine Marceau, with the Capitaine de Cuers, who died Superior of the Priests of the Most Holy Sacrament, with Père Eymard, the saintly founder of that Congregation, with Père Hermann, and with Dom Guéranger, of which mention has already been made, and with so many other devoted priests and missionaries, M. Aubineau adds that M. Dupont had kept up, ever since his youth, familiar relations with that heroine of charity, Sœur Rosalie. "All, in short," he says, "who loved, practised, and knew what is the true good, had some acquaintance with the small house in the Rue St. Etienne." And now the *salon* of that humble domicile had become, as it were, a focus of blessings and graces suited to the respective wants of different souls. Numerous as were the bodily cures, more numerous still were the spiritual benefits obtained either by the applicants themselves or for others; sometimes even the smallest drop of the oil given by the holy man would produce miraculous effects at a distance, not only on infirm bodies, but on rebellious wills. He seemed, moreover, to be gifted

with a species of supernatural insight, which at times would make him discern at once what some stranger came to ask, or he would perceive that the grace most needed was not that for which his prayers had been requested. Of this extraordinary faculty several examples are recorded; we must content ourselves with giving two.

A pious young lady of Versailles had been cured by M. Dupont of some malady in presence of her parents. She came a second time by herself, to solicit, through his prayers, a special favour which she named. He listened with a gentle smile, and, taking his pen, entered in his register, not the petition she had made, but one quite different. She drew his attention to this, but he would make no change in his entry, and, in fact, she obtained the request which he had substituted for her own. "I shall never forget," she said, "the calm but deeply penetrating look which the holy man turned upon me. It seemed to say, 'Poor child, you know not what you ask. There is something better for you; and God will grant it you.'"

A lady, living in the neighbourhood of Tours, was accidentally making some stay in the place. Passing one day through the Rue St. Etienne with her husband and daughter, she begged them to wait a few minutes while she went into M. Dupont's house for a little bottle of the oil. She entered the room, which was free to all, and went to make a short prayer before the Holy Face, not to keep the others waiting. The holy man, who was personally unknown to her, was at his accustomed place, and, as she rose to depart, he looked at her, and, in a tone of authority, desired her to be seated. "Madam," he said, "you torment and harass yourself a great deal too much. You would

have made much greater progress in the way of salvation, and would be far happier, if you abandoned yourself more entirely to Providence." He continued to speak for some time in the same strain, and related how his mother, who had always extremely dreaded death, had expired peacefully with a smile upon her lips. "The woman who feareth God," he added, "shall laugh in the latter days."\* This speech, for which there was no apparent motive, so surprised the lady that, on rising to rejoin her party, she was almost inclined to believe that he had spoken under strong excitement, or that his mental faculties were enfeebled by age. However, she did not leave without begging his prayers for an object she had much at heart. "I promise to pray," he replied, "but you will not obtain your request;" nor did she. On that same day she met at dinner her former confessor, now a bishop, who was still acting as her director. She related to him her singular interview of the morning. Taking her aside, the bishop said, "I have no further counsel to give you. M. Dupont has said all you require. His words exactly express my opinion regarding you, and of what is suitable for your soul." Then the lady knew that in what he had said to her the servant of God must have been divinely instructed.

From many other similar instances we select the following, as illustrative of the extraordinary graces accorded to his prayers.

An aged lady was living in the utter neglect of all religious practices. Being taken dangerously ill, she was earnestly recommended to the prayers of the man of God. He became deeply interested in her case, and inquired every day as to the dispositions she was

\* Proverbs xxxi. 25, 30.

in. Her attendant, seeing her mistress reduced to the last extremity, ventured to suggest the visit of a priest, but the suggestion was rejected with indignation. M. Dupont, however, was not discouraged, and never ceased supplicating God for her conversion; when, all at once, without another word being said, the old lady became perfectly calm, asked for a priest, and made her confession. It pleased God, moreover, in answer to His servant's prayers, to prolong her life for four more years. To the end she continued faithful to her religious duties, and made a truly edifying death, fortified by the sacraments of the Church.

M. D——, a worthy man, in the world's esteem, lived, as did his wife also, without practising any religion. Everything which could remind them of the Catholic worship was so offensive to them that, having become possessed of a crucifix through some partition of family property, Mme. D—— gave it away, saying that she would not have in the house a symbol which was the harbinger of woe. But, though they had parted with the sign of salvation, God, in His mercy, sent them a cross in the shape of suffering, whereby to recall them to Himself; and it was through the instrumentality of the servant of the Holy Face that the grace of conversion was to come. The husband was struck with paralysis, which kept him a painful prisoner in his chair or on his bed. His temper, naturally irritable, became still more embittered, and neither his wife nor his servant, both of whom were unremitting in their attentions, were able to pacify or control him. To complete their misfortunes, their devoted servant accidentally received a blow, which totally disabled her, and the effects of which were of so serious a nature that, in the opinion

of the doctor, the only possible remedy was a dangerous operation. Having heard of M. Dupont, she went to Tours, and, after praying with him before the Holy Face and applying the usual unctions, she was instantly and completely healed. So marvellous an occurrence made, as was natural, a deep impression on her master; and it came into his mind that he who had obtained by his prayers the cure of his servant, might do the same for him; but then the thought occurred—what right had he, a grievous sinner, to expect so great a favour? He resolved, however, to write to the holy man, humbly begging his prayers, and confessing that he had never so much as made his first communion, but that, unworthy as he felt himself to be, he nevertheless had hopes of being restored. M. Dupont made him the subject of his earnest prayers, and in a short time this poor man, who had lived for so many years alienated from God, received the Bread of Angels; showed himself tranquilly resigned to the Divine Will, and died the death of the just. His wife, touched by her husband's change of heart, also yielded to grace, and became a fervent Christian.

The following incident reminds us of the pious stratagems by which extraordinary conversions were effected through the instrumentality of the "miraculous medal." We will give it in the words of the narrator, who was acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. "There was a man, forty years of age, who had not approached the sacraments since his first communion. His wife, who was very pious, never ceased praying and even offering large alms for his conversion; but all in vain: he had adopted impious notions and believed in nothing. She came

and recounted her troubles to us and to ask my daughter's advice. My daughter said to her, 'As all your remonstrances are useless, say nothing further to him; anything you say only has the effect of embittering him the more and keeping him away from the good God. Bring me a shirt belonging to this heart of iron and we will melt it.' Inside this shirt, on the side next the heart, we let fall a very little drop of the holy oil which we had from M. Dupont. A few days later, the man all at once asks for a *Journée du Chrétien* and says his prayers. On the following Sunday the stratagem was repeated, and the scoffer asked for a priest. The Rev. Père Liot heard his confession; it is a real and solid conversion. His wife never ceases blessing the servant of the Holy Face, but her husband has never been informed of the means adopted."

What took place in M. Dupont's *salon* so far exceeded the powers of nature that the spectators were sometimes seized with terror at beholding things for which they could not account. Thus, a pious and venerable lady, who was a stranger in Tours, wished to go and see the holy man and pray before the Holy Face. While she was there, a striking miracle was wrought. A man came in who had an enormous swelling on his hand; she beheld it gradually disappear as the servant of God applied the unctions. Quite overpowered by the sight, the lady ran out of his room in a sort of panic and, hurrying to the house of the friend with whom she was staying, related what she had seen, at the same time declaring she could not believe her eyes, that what she had witnessed was beyond the bounds of possibility, and yet she admitted that the thing had really happened; she



could not be deceived. She was completely upset; the supernatural and divine had transported her, as it were, into another world. When her mind had calmed down, she acknowledged that a miracle had been worked, a thing impossible to man, but possible to God, who is Almighty.

Days of sorrow and suffering old age were now approaching for the servant of God, those days when the wise man tells us we shall say, "They please me not." To all alike, indeed, those days have in them no natural pleasure, but, as we have seen, M. Dupont's feelings were so supernaturalised that, in the truest sense, his happiness consisted in the good pleasure of God. His merit was to do His will. Nevertheless, pain can never be anything but grievous to nature, and it pleased God that for his more complete purification he should suffer in every vulnerable point both of mind and body. Age and infirmities were already beginning to make themselves sensibly felt when the disasters of 1870 fell upon France, which he loved as a Christian patriot alone can love his country. At the news of the first crushing defeats which the French armies had sustained, we find him writing, "There is nothing to say, nothing to do but to humble ourselves, with our heads in the dust, letting the justice of God pass by." But the divine justice, whilst striking France, was by the same blow to inflict severe trials on the servant of the Holy Face. The first which he most keenly felt was the forced suppression of that work which was so inexpressibly dear to him, the Nocturnal Adoration, all the able-bodied men being enlisted for the defence of the country, and stress of public business devolving on others. He did not complain, but suffered in silence.

His health rendered him unfit for any active service, so he spent his time in prayer before the Holy Face. His house, however, continued open day and night, not only to pilgrims, who still continued to come, although in reduced numbers, but to the young recruits about to depart for the army. His hospitality was well known, and they used it freely, recommending others who were passing through to do the same. We find M. Dupont mentioning two in particular, who arrived at one o'clock in the morning, having but a few minutes to spare, "which," he says, "they wisely spent in coming to do homage to the Holy Face, and arm themselves with a medal of St. Benedict."

But events were hurrying on, and he adds, "The Prussians are at Orleans. We do not know whether they will come to Tours. Be this as it may, nothing will be done without the Master's permission. May His Holy Name be blessed!" The nuns of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial, with whom our holy man kept up a close connection, had in concert with him conceived the idea of embroidering a banner of the Sacred Heart for the brave soldiers who were to defend the capital against the invader. The Sacred Heart was represented upon it with this legend: "Heart of Jesus, save France." It was accordingly sent from Paray-le-Monial to M. Dupont, with the request that he would present it before the Holy Face, and then forward it to General Trochu, the defender of Paris. The sudden blockade of the capital rendered this scheme abortive, and it was then resolved to deliver the standard to Charette, who had just arrived at Tours, and whose Zouaves were afterwards called the Volunteers of the West. That truly Christian soldier accepted the gift, and on the morrow the case containing the

banner was opened before the Holy Face. Prayers were then offered for the salvation of France, and it was resolved to carry the standard to the tomb of St. Martin, wherein it was to be laid until the following day. It was also decided that on the reverse side should be embroidered the words: "St. Martin, protect France," the Carmelite nuns undertaking to execute the work. This same idea of connecting the salvation of France with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Thaumaturgus of Gaul, is embodied in the banner of the Church of the Sacred Heart at Paris, which on the one side has a representation of the Sacred Heart and on the other a figure of St. Martin. We now see that it originated before the Sacred Face, and was due to a happy inspiration of the holy man. It is well known that under this memorable standard Charette and his heroic Zouaves covered themselves with glory at Patay, winning the admiration even of their foes.

It was not long before the Prussians entered Tours, which they occupied during the armistice. It was a cruel trial to M. Dupont, but he humbly submitted, repeating with the Patriarch Job, as was his wont, "*Sit nomen Domini benedictum!*" More than this, he did not fail to profit even by this sad opportunity to speak of God, and promote the glory of the Holy Face, as he had previously told his friends he should do in the event of the Prussians coming to Tours. Writing on March 5th, 1871, he says, "For several weeks I have had to lodge fifteen or sixteen Prussians, all Catholics, except two or three, who are Protestants. Their behaviour has been excellent." And again he writes: "Among the Prussians whom I have had in my house Catholics were in the majority, and they used to pray much before the Holy

Face. One of them even obtained a singular grace." He goes on to exhort his correspondent to pray very earnestly that the Revolution might not gain a footing in Paris. He already discerned what was coming, and in his eyes the Revolution was far more to be dreaded than the foreign invader. Indeed, we find him alluding in very moderate terms to the hardships of the occupation, and describing the conduct of their "guests" as not, generally speaking, offensive; but the men who were preparing the reign of the Commune in Paris he characterises as lawless barbarians, who in their shameful audacity were arraying themselves against the whole sound portion of the nation. "May the Lord," he adds, "turn away the scourge which seems so seriously to threaten us!" His worst apprehensions were, as we well know, fully realised. During the hideous days of the Commune, and amid his bitter anguish, we find this man of faith and prayer occupied in collecting the names of all the saints honoured in the unhappy capital of France, wherewith to compose a novena of supplication, which he called the *Litanies of the Saints of Paris*. This series of invocations, amounting to eighty in number, was accompanied by a short notice of each saint. Many devout souls at his suggestion joined in using it, and we may believe that their fervent petitions had no small share in liberating Paris from the horrible tyranny of the Commune.

After the deliverance, his dominant idea was that of repairing the moral ruins of his country. "Shall we be wise enough," he says, "to profit by the victory we have gained over crime? Men will hasten to rebuild the crumbled walls. It would be a hundred times better to set about raising up sick souls, and

obliging great and small to learn the Catechism. Notwithstanding the lamentable state to which France was reduced, his hope and confidence never abated. "Let us place ourselves," he writes, "in the hands of God. He alone can save us from the shipwreck which menaces Christian civilisation. Happily, God is all-powerful. Were He not so, there would be reason to fear that evil would prevail. Let us hope, then, in spite of appearances." These feelings of confidence were further increased by the miraculous apparition of the Blessed Virgin to some little children at Pontmain. This predilection of the Mother of God for children delights him. "Precedence undoubtedly to children!" he exclaims. "What an abasement to pride!" Convinced that France was being chastised for her pride, he was equally persuaded that salvation would come to her through the intercession of the little and humble. "Think of me," he writes to a friend, "when you find yourself this week at the tomb of St. Geneviève. It is the little ones who will save France. Benedict Labre will join his efforts to those of St. Geneviève, Jeanne d'Arc, Germaine Cousin, and other lowly ones, unknown to men."

The situation of Rome was a subject of poignant distress to him, but it need scarcely be said that in this case his confidence of final triumph was far stronger than in that of France, which had no divine promises to rely upon, as had the Church and her Head. "The promises made to Peter," he says, "repose in their plenitude on our beloved Pius IX. What more can we ask? The blood of the first martyrs was the seed of the Church; that of the martyrs of the nineteenth century will restore to the Church its pristine vigour. And observe that many Christians have need of what

may be called a resurrection. We are living at a very solemn moment!" And, again: "The blood of the martyrs gave birth to the early Christians; the martyrs of the nineteenth century will arrest the revival of paganism." Two great manifestations of Catholic faith came to cheer M. Dupont's closing years, like the last bright rays of a setting sun. One was occasioned by the discovery of the tomb of the Blessed Jeanne-Marie de Maillé, one of the glories of the province of Tours, whose *cultus* had lately, through the zealous exertions of Cardinal Guibert, been solemnly authorised and approved by the Holy See. Under Mgr. Fruchaud, his successor, a *triduum* was observed in her honour, when the faith of Touraine blazed forth in all the splendour of past ages. The new glory which this illustrious servant of St. Martin received increased the enthusiasm with which his annual festival was celebrated, and the solemnity of November the 11th, 1872, together with the devotional exercises which preceded and followed it, was the occasion of an outburst of piety and fervour, such as had not been witnessed at Tours in the memory of any living.

Days of isolation were now at hand for the holy man, and of suffering which was to render him yet more holy. The Nocturnal Adoration, long interrupted, was with difficulty restored, and then only partially. It was found impossible to have meetings more than once a month, and these were maintained only through the exertions of some zealous individuals whom M. Dupont had imbued with his own spirit; but he himself was no longer there to inflame their hearts by word and example. It was a great privation to him. Moreover, the public disasters, by dispersing or breaking up families and producing

other social disturbances, had naturally affected the resort of pilgrims to the Holy Face. Visitors from a distance became much less numerous, although the devotion itself had in no wise abated, as appears from the letters he was continually receiving from persons applying for the oil and soliciting his prayers ; his correspondence, indeed, had become perfectly overwhelming of late years. But crowds no longer flocked to his house, only a few pilgrims came singly ; and even these he was scarcely able to receive, for his infirmities had begun to weigh heavily upon him. He was now in his seventy-fifth year, and death was thinning the ranks of his friends, relatives, and neighbours. He had too affectionate a heart to be insensible to this loss. We find him in his letters, which were becoming more and more brief, alluding with deep emotion to the death of the venerable Abbé of Solesmes, and that of his dear cousin, Adrien de Beauchamp, as also to the decease of one whom he calls his "good neighbour," a lady with whom he had entertained intimate relations for the last forty years.

To the various distressing ailments which bowed him down, aggravated by his sleeplessness, which began during the days of the Prussian invasion, was added that of failing eyesight, which often rendered it difficult for him to decipher the letters addressed to him, while the crippling gout in his fingers made him, as he says, write so slowly that he often forgot half his words. But in all this he beheld only an effect of the Divine Will, and he never uttered a complaint. "Yesterday evening," he writes, "I had a great attack of vertigo. The doctor assures me that it is nothing. Nevertheless, I had a near view of the fact—for I preserved my consciousness—that it does



not need a cannon-ball to shatter our earthly case. I have evidently entered on the way of infirmities, a truly penitential way, where, willingly or unwillingly, we must do God's will. Beg for me the grace to accept this penance lovingly;" and, in fact, he did accept all the pains and infirmities of old age most cheerfully, even what was most distressing, the diminished power of his mental faculties, and in particular of his memory, which had always been so excellent, but which he believed to be now failing. "If my limbs," he says, "do me but a sorry service, my memory is nearly useless. This is what I am come to. Humanly speaking, it is sad, but it is God's will: amen! It is meet and right." So far from rebelling against what was for him a new order of things, he more than ever aspired after silence and oblivion. We find him entreating a friend to aid him in the fulfilment of this desire, while of another, who with the best intentions was striving to divert him from it, he says, "I am going to write and tell her that the great need of my soul is to be buried in profoundest silence. You know what good reasons I have for keeping myself at anchor in the port of abjection." He who formerly had his hand ready for every pious undertaking, now put from him all such projects. To a lady who had proposed his engaging in some good work, he replies, "You are asking of me what is simply impossible. I am sinking deeper every day into a state of decrepitude, and am quite incapable of active service. I am fit for nothing, I do nothing, I am worth nothing."

His serenity of mind was, however, quite undisturbed, and he received his friends, so long as it was possible, with the same cordiality as ever. We have

proof of this in the account given by one who was his guest at a time when he must have been nearly seventy-eight years of age, and from this gentleman's report it would appear that his mental powers were not as much impaired as his humility led him to suppose. "It was enough," says the writer, "to have seen and heard him, or to have received one of his letters, to become his admirer, his disciple, his friend. This it was which attracted me so powerfully to Tours. My last visit was in the month of November, 1874. I had received several invitations to dinner, but I reserved myself for M. Dupont's. He appeared to me much enfeebled in health by age and infirmities, but his kindness and the welcome he gave me were only the more precious, and his memory was unimpaired. On entering, I found a countryman walking about the room with an easy step, and looking much pleased. It was only after he was gone that I learned what had taken place." M. Dupont, he proceeds to say, had begun an inscription for a crutchstick, which the man had gratefully left in his hands. The inscription stated that he was quite lame when he entered the room, but that, after praying before the Holy Face, he rose perfectly cured. The narrator was much struck with the simple manner in which M. Dupont recounted the circumstance, and readily accepted an invitation to dinner, inwardly rejoicing at the prospect of being so long alone with the holy man, even if he never uttered a word. But he little expected the treat that awaited him. For M. Dupont's whole conversation turned upon the interpretation of passages of Scripture, on which he commented with a depth and an ingenuity so admirable that his guest, as he declares, felt his memory, his imagination, and his whole heart nourished, enlight-

ened, and warmed by the words that fell from his lips. On taking leave, the man of God presented him with a little parcel of earth, gathered from the Garden of Olives, which a pilgrim had brought him.

This was probably one of M. Dupont's last receptions. Silence and solitude were about to become his portion. When the pilgrims who continued to visit his *salon*, and pray before the Holy Face did not specifically ask to see him, or when he felt unable to receive them, he would send his servant, whom he had trained to perform this office. He bore the trials of this isolation with a most imperturbable patience, and they served to bring into prominent relief his admirable humility, as well, no doubt, as to give to it its finishing-touch of perfection. An intimate acquaintance amused herself once with putting this virtue to the proof. "Would you believe it," she said to him, "but I got quite angry to-day with a good man who was going away because he did not find you in your room. I told him he had no faith, that he was an unbeliever; saying that you were only the man who paid for the oil, and that it was the Holy Face which worked all the cures." "How well and truly you spoke!" M. Dupont replied, gratefully extending his hand to her. "I will put some of that good oil on your forehead; it works wonders on minds as well as on bodies."

He studiously avoided everything which could attract any mark of esteem to himself, especially from his ecclesiastical superiors. To be gratified with such proofs of regard from those he respected could hardly have been regarded as a fault, but in his eyes it would have been a great imperfection; possibly however, it had never been necessary for him to resist the tempta-

tion to indulge in any such natural satisfaction, for his soul, obedient to the movements of grace, had always, as we have seen, shrunk from notice, particularly on the part of superiors. During the last years of his life, the successive Archbishops of Tours, who knew his worth, used to call to see him; he could not help receiving them, but these visits were an occasion of confusion and embarrassment, rather than of pleasure. His state of isolation, which made him more than ever a man of reparation and a victim of penance, caused him to be continually dwelling interiorly on the Passion of Jesus, and whatever was connected with the dolorous mysteries of our crucified Lord had for him a special interest. He had always kept himself constantly informed of all that related to Louise Lateau, the stigmatised ecstatic of Bois-d'Haine, and he preserved as a precious relic a piece of linen steeped in her blood. Only two months before his death, on receiving the visit of an ecclesiastic with whom he was on intimate terms, he said, "Do you know what I was thinking of when you entered the room?" The priest replied that he was not a good hand at guessing, but he thought he could scarcely be mistaken if he were to say that he was thinking of the good God. But before he had well concluded his remark, M. Dupont had resumed. "I was thinking," he said, "of the person who has the greatest merit before God on earth, Louise Lateau; she has the greatest merit because, suffering as she does for the love of God, she also nurses the sick." He was not himself able to combine these two lives, which would have been the ardent desire of his heart, had not all his desires been absorbed in the one desire to acquiesce in God's most holy will.

Compelled, as we have seen, to abstain from active

works of zeal or charity, he still maintained his connection with the Vestuary of St. Martin, of which he was the president; the meetings, in compliance with the wish of the Commission, still taking place in his room. After the conference, the members would retire full of pious joy and edification; yet M. Dupont was now incapable of any sort of co-operative action with his colleagues, and often said very little. "It was enough for us," observed one of their number, "to know that he was there in continual prayer. When engaged in our work afterwards, we felt encouraged and supported by the sweet remembrance of him, and by the efficacy we attributed to his unceasing prayers. He seemed to us to have in him the power of a whole monastery, whence the divine praises and the perfume of prayer are perpetually ascending to heaven." Truly sanctity exhales a fragrance which is spiritually felt and realised by those who approach it, but can no more be described than can a natural scent. It is the "good odour of Christ."\*

M. Dupont had for a considerable time been compelled to give up his visits to the different religious communities and charitable institutions in which he was interested, but he made an exception, as long as he was able, in favour of the Little Sisters of the Poor, to whom he would have himself conveyed occasionally in a carriage, always taking care to arrive at their recreation hour, which he would enliven by his cheerful conversation; going afterwards to see the poor old people, for each of whom he had a pleasant word. The very sight of him seemed to do them good, they crowded about him, and were as familiar with him as children with a beloved father; indeed, "good Father Dupont" was the name, as has been seen, by which

\* 2 Cor. ii. 15.

they habitually called him. These visits, which, however, became more and more rare, were regarded as a sort of festival by the whole community. On the days when paralysis and gout gave him a little respite, he profited by the reprieve to assist at Mass, a happiness which he could now but seldom enjoy. He had long frequented the chapel of the Carmelites for his daily Mass and Communion. Thither in past days he used to repair in all weathers; in summer at half-past five, in winter at six; lighting himself along the street on dark mornings with a little pocket-lantern. On entering, it was his custom to pause close to the holy-water stoup, because immediately beneath it was the tomb of Sister Saint-Pierre, to whom, in his simple faith, he had always a word to say concerning the interests of the Holy Face and the work of reparation.\* But now times were changed, and his place was vacant in that sanctuary so dear to him. For a short while he had been able to profit by the nearer vicinity of a chapel which the Jesuit Fathers had opened in the Rue Nicolas-Simon, but, upon a change taking place in their abode, he no longer enjoyed this advantage, now more than ever indispensable to him owing to his increasing infirmities. As his state grew worse, he was obliged gradually to abstain from leaving his house, and at last was confined altogether to his room, which, to use the Abbé Janvier's words, "after being the scene of the last trials of this true Christian, was to become his mortuary chamber."

This little room was on the first floor, and his

\* M. Dupont's pious wish that the place of her interment should be indicated by a tablet or gravestone is now realised; for near the entrance door, an inscription marks the exact spot in the cloister where Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre reposes.

removal into it had not been of his own choice, for it will be remembered that for years he occupied his *salon* on the ground-floor, a commodious apartment, opening into the garden. Here he had a small iron bedstead, concealed during the day-time by a curtain, and so, when this room became practically the oratory of the Holy Face, he was able to satisfy his devotion by night as well as by day. It was a happiness to him to sleep in presence of the Adorable Face of our Lord, and he would often rise from his bed during those solitary and silent hours, to kneel and pray before it. When about to be absent for a few weeks, probably on occasion of one of his last visits to the waters of Bourbon, his servant Adèle asked permission to have the house set to rights while he was away, the crowds which daily frequented it having rendered a thorough cleaning indispensable. Part of it also required fresh painting. For this and other trifling arrangements she obtained his consent, but she ventured further, and removed the iron bedstead, on account of the inconveniences resulting from the using as a sleeping chamber a room frequented by strangers at every hour of the day. She bought another bedstead, and placed it in a small apartment on the first floor, which had served as a sitting-room for Mme. d'Arnaud. She must have known that this change would be a disagreeable surprise for her master, but she reckoned on his patience. When M. Dupont, on his return, found that he was no longer to keep watch before the Holy Face, it must have caused him a severe pang, but, crossing his hands, he only said mildly, "My God, is it possible? Why is this, Adèle?" Then she explained in her fashion how troublesome, as well as unbecoming, it was that he should spend the night in a room in which he had to receive so



much company ; whereupon, without manifesting any signs of regret, he quietly acquiesced in the sacrifice imposed upon him, regarding it as being the will of God, thus signified to him. This was after 1860.

From that time he slept upstairs, spending the day, as usual, in his *salon*. When gout and paralysis gradually deprived him of the power of moving, it was only occasionally, as we have seen, that he could come down to receive visitors or sit at his bureau ; nevertheless, even when ultimately confined to his bedroom, he made an effort, and that almost to the last, in spite of the crippled state of his hands, to write a few words in reply to some of his correspondents. Indeed we find him jesting about his handwriting to a friend in America. "What a difference," he says, "between your writing and mine ! Yours is getting that of a giant, while mine, as age advances, is dwindling down to nothing. But what matter ? our business is to make progress in the way which leads to Heaven. The one who arrives there first will be mindful of the other who lags behind. The gout," he continues, "without quitting my left hand, seems disposed to lay hold of my right ; and if this happens it will reduce my diminutive letters to nothing at all. Onward, *Fiat !*" Sometimes, but rarely, he would avail himself of the pen of his servant, Zephyrin, as we find him doing ten days before his death. The number of letters which poured in upon him during the last years of his life was quite incalculable ; for his reputation for sanctity had spread far and wide. An examination of these letters, of which hundreds remained after his death, served to prove the extraordinary confidence reposed in him by persons of every rank, condition, and nationality. People wrote to ask for his prayers as if they were addressing

a saint in Heaven, laying bare to him their inmost hearts, their sorrows, their anxieties, and all their needs, spiritual and temporal, as they might to their most intimate friend, to their confessor, or to God Himself. Those who were aware of the state of his health, gave strong expression to their grief, and promised to pray for his recovery, but far the greater number, imagining him as still seated at his bureau or kneeling before the Holy Face, marvelled at his silence, and implored him to make some short reply. Letters of this kind continued to arrive from a distance even long after his death.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

DURING the last three years of his life, crippled by gout and afflicted with creeping paralysis, M. Dupont, as we have seen, had to change his entire mode of life. Apart from the excruciating bodily pains which he endured, it is difficult for us to over-estimate the privations which this confinement imposed upon him. The worst of all was the deprivation of Mass, and of that "Bread containing all sweetness" which had been his daily refection for so many years. Every week a priest of his parish brought him Holy Communion, and that day was a day of ineffable consolation to him; but one of the Vicars of the Cathedral, aware how his fervent soul must hunger after a more frequent reception, offered to obtain permission from the Archbishop to

have Mass occasionally celebrated in his room. M. Dupont's humility, however, would not permit him to accept the proffered favour, dear as it would have been to him. For himself he never craved anything singular or exceptional, and he even had a scruple in consenting to have the Divine Eucharist brought to him as often as it was, feeling as if Jesus Christ and His ministers ought not to be troubled so frequently on his account. This refusal is the more astonishing when we reflect how much the sacrifice must have cost him. M. Léon Aubineau's account of the matter is worth quoting, because it gives us a glimpse of what the holy man endured in this his greatest trial. "We know," he writes, "how he was on the point of giving way for a moment beside his daughter's deathbed, how he dreaded lest he should sink under the weight of his paternal grief, and one day he was surprised by a similar weakness when dwelling on the thought of being deprived of the Holy Eucharist. He confided his sorrows to an intimate friend. 'You know,' he said to him, 'what Communion was to me. Judge, then, of my suffering.' He pronounced these words with a tone of such extreme anguish, and his friend was so sensible of the pangs which his hunger for Jesus in His Eucharistic Presence was causing him, that he hastened to assure him that it would be very easy to obtain permission for Mass to be celebrated in his room, and that he would himself willingly undertake to procure it for him. This, in fact, he was in a condition to promise. But the bare idea threw M. Dupont into the greatest confusion, and he exclaimed, 'Oh, a wretched creature, a sinner like me! Is it not already too much that our Lord should be troubled to come here once a-week. No, I never could endure that my God should be

troubled further on my account ;' and the tears were in his eyes as he spoke."

Deprived of what had been his daily bread, he would go in spirit every morning from church to church throughout the world begging our Lord to communicate to him any little particles which might fall from the Sacred Host. "I occupy myself," he said, "in gathering them up." Thus he endeavoured to cheat his imagination and appease his soul's hunger ; while at the same time he was making a fervent and most profitable spiritual communion.

There was a prayer very dear to him which he had extracted from a Life of St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, written by one of the Fathers of St. Edmund of Pontigny, which the saint's biographer states the holy bishop daily addressed to the Apostle St. John, and from which, when kissing the crucifix at the hour of death, he received a precious fruit of consolation. It ran thus: "O beloved disciple of Jesus, O virgin Apostle, obtain for me from the Lord that happy death which was accorded to thyself, the beautiful death of the saints. May I end my life in true faith, firm hope, and perfect charity. May I, preserving to its close a sound mind and a clear intellect, be able sincerely to confess my sins, and to be fortified with the viaticum of salvation and the unction of the dying. May I expire consumed with an ardent thirst to see the desirable Face of our Lord Jesus Christ." These last words in particular enraptured him. He was perpetually repeating them, and would pronounce them slowly, as though he tasted their sweetness and lingered over it. With his gouty hands, scarcely able to hold a pen, he would take many copies of this prayer to distribute among his friends.

During the prolonged period when he was fastened, as it were, to his arm-chair in his little upper room, he was a subject of the greatest edification to his servants, both in word and example. His faith and his simplicity were conspicuous on all occasions. "What are we," he would say to them, "poor little beings? What can a little creature do but stretch out its hand, and make a little prayer to its heavenly Father? Is it possible? God does the will of His creature! Let the creature, then, do the will of God." Or again, "Never take the high path of the mountains, but ever, in your lowliness, choose the level road that winds round the foot." He would strongly urge those who waited on him to be "faithful to their good angels." "Always accept," he would say, "the good thoughts which they suggest to you; to neglect them would be an infidelity to God." He exhorted them never to compromise their name as Christians by lending an ear to Satan. "Get behind us!" he would say contemptuously to the devil; "get behind us! *Vade retro!*" Then, taking off his cap, he would salute him with a mocking "Good-night to you." His fun and humour were inexhaustible when speaking to his servants of the arch-enemy. "How can any one," he would say, "be a child of God and converse with the accursed one? Wretch that he is! leave him his cunning; it is all that remains to him. There is no longer any heart in him, he has lost all. As for you, you can have everything. Only hold out your hand to God like a poor man: that is prayer enough; and then, when you have received from the hand of our Lord, make as though you were raising that Hand to your lips, kissing it with gratitude: one good kiss, and a simple 'I thank Thee.'"

The poor whom he thus proposed as a model had ever been the objects of his tenderest love and, we may add, of his respect; and now, in these his last and touching instructions, he earnestly exhorted those about him to treat them with reverence. "Let us always be exact in serving the poor," he would say; "let us never delay, for they are kings: they will be kings in eternity." And then he would give proofs from his own personal experience of the importance of not deferring any service which we can do them. One day, he said, he wished to go and visit a poor sick man who was the object of his care, when it began to rain in torrents, and his mother strongly objected to his going out in such weather. So, while waiting for the storm to cease, he opened a book: it was St. Gertrude's writings. His eye rested at once on these words: "The poor are the princes of the heavenly court; we must never keep them waiting." It was like a flash of light to his mind, and nothing now could stop him. He hurried off, found the sick man almost in the agonies of death, and had only just time to prepare him for receiving the priest who came to administer to him the last sacraments. He regarded this as a warning, and resolved from that time forward never to keep either the sick or the poor waiting. He loved to repeat the words: "*Da et accipe*—Give and receive;"\* for, in proportion, he said, as we give to the poor promptly and generously, shall we receive from the hand of God. He used also to say that we ought to be very careful about the clothes given to the poor, and, in particular, the linen. He insisted on its being very white and clean, and "smelling sweet." There was one other subject to which he

\* Eccles. xiv. 16.

was always reverting, the happiness and necessity of Holy Communion. "A Christian without Holy Communion," he said, "is a fish out of water;" and he would quote Scripture in proof of his assertion; for from the first page of Genesis to the last of the Apocalypse, where there is mention of the Tree of Life, watered by a living stream, it was one continued invitation to nourish ourselves with the Eucharistic Bread. Such were the usual topics of his conversation with his servants, and with a few devout neighbours who would come to see what little service they could render him. All alike have felt that the memory of his words has been profitable to their souls. The words they could repeat, for they had never forgotten them, but it was impossible to reproduce the sallies of playful gaiety, and the charm of manner and of gesture which accompanied all he said.

M. Dupont had always loved children, and he gladly received them now. He seemed to become young again in their company, talked freely with them, and led them to talk freely in return; he made them sing and repeat their catechism or their prayers. When young people were brought to see him who were about to be sent to a boarding-school, he would encourage them in the practice of prayer and diligence in their studies, and never failed to teach them the method he always prescribed for obtaining a prize at the close of the scholastic year. He had a story to relate on the subject. A friend of his had placed his son at the Lyceum of Tours, and, as he was going away for some years, he begged M. Dupont to give an eye to him during his absence. The boy was entered at Easter, and was the last of his class in composition. As this occurred on several successive occasions, the child



became thoroughly disheartened, and neither the visits nor the counsels of his kind friend availed to rouse him to fresh exertion. M. Dupont was much distressed at this, particularly as the lad had been specially commended to his care. One day, when he found the pupil more discouraged than ever, he said, "I know a secret, my little friend, by means of which you may be the first in composition, and get a prize at the end of the year." The boy opened his eyes with astonishment. "If you will promise to make use of it, I will tell it you." He promised. "Well, it is to repeat frequently this little prayer: 'My God, when shall I love Thee?'" For several weeks M. Dupont never failed to go and see the boy daily in order to make sure that he was faithful to his promise. At the end of the year he was actually at the head of his class, and gained one of the first prizes. His teachers were greatly surprised, and the head-master, who knew how much M. Dupont had interested himself about the boy, asked him by what mysterious means he had been able to stir him up to make such rapid progress. "That is my secret," answered M. Dupont with an air of gravity; "but I will confide it to you on one condition: that you will tell it to all your pupils."

An anecdote may here be given as illustrating his familiar way with children. A little boy, six years of age, had been given a picture representing St. John Baptist with the Lamb of God. In his childish glee, he cried out to his mother, "Look, Mama, I have got a little lamb." At this moment, M. Dupont, coming up behind, laid his hands on the child's shoulders and, bending over him, whispered in his ear, "You have got a lamb, my dear, because you have been a good boy. If you had not been good, you would have got

a wolf." "A wolf!" replied the child, half turning round. "Hold your tongue. A wolf eats people up." Hearing this, the mother chided the little fellow, and began making excuses for what she called his rudeness; but the holy man, charmed with the child's vivacity, said, "Let him be; he has spoken truly; truth is found in the mouths of babes: the Lamb has saved men, the wolf devours them." During his last illness M. Dupont was, as it were, a very child himself in the pleasure which he showed when some little object having pious associations was offered to him. A lady had just returned from a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial. When visiting in the monastery garden the celebrated clump of nut-trees which witnessed the ecstasies of the Blessed Margaret Mary, she had gathered a nut which she took home with her and planted in a flower-pot. To her great delight it sprouted, and when the first leaf made its appearance, she carried it to M. Dupont's house to show it to him. At the time he was scarcely capable of moving and was racked with pain, but, on being told from whence the little plant had come, the devout adorer of the Sacred Heart uncovered his head and kissed it devoutly. Seeing the pleasure it gave him, she left it with him. He had it put on his window-sill, and every day, as long as he lived, he took care that it should be duly tended and watered. The plant grew, and is now in the possession of the Carmelites, to whom it is the object of a double veneration.

Assuredly pains and privations were not wanting in these his last years to this generous lover of the cross. The very patience with which he accepted them veils from us in a measure their severity. Our Lord knows what each of us can bear, and, as this brave, strong, and fervent spirit could bear a heavy burden,

it was a heavy burden that was laid upon him. Step by step had his Divine Master been disengaging him ever more and more from every earthly affection. The solitude to which he was now consigned was to perfect the work. For, cheerfully as he submitted to his isolation, accepting it, not only as being the will of God in his regard, but as what he was intimately convinced was most beneficial to his soul, it would be a mistake to suppose that he did not feel it keenly. Let us figure to ourselves what this void, this silence, this sequestration must have been after the life to which for years he had been accustomed. Retirement is grateful to one who lives perforce in a crowd, as had been his case. It would have been a joy to him, at a time when his charity did not allow him to take even needful repose for body or mind, to escape from the throng and spend some quiet hours alone with God, but now it was not retirement which he was called upon to enjoy, but solitary imprisonment to which he was condemned, with almost unceasing torture, week after week and month after month. Add to this, the seeming abandonment by friends whom he had much loved. Probably they did not mean to be neglectful, and there might not be wanting good reasons in their eyes for dispensing themselves from visits which would be painful to themselves and, as they might suppose, could afford no relief or pleasure to the sufferer. But, be this as it may, he was evidently distressed by their absence, although he never uttered a complaint.

We learn the spiritual value he placed upon his forced retreat by the description he has himself given of a Christian's room. "Would you know what your room is? It is a little hermitage in the midst of a

town, and you are the recluse ; there you practise without witness or restraint your favourite devotions, you kiss the ground, you prostrate yourself, you strike your breast, you press your lips to the Sacred Wounds of the Amiable Saviour ; in a word, you do all that a hermit can do in his desert. Would you know what your room is ? It is a little temple, it is a chapel, of which you are the priest ; the oratory is the altar ; the crucifix, the picture of the Mother of God, the holy water, raise devout affections in your soul. Your heart is a burning lamp, consuming itself before the Lord ; your prayers are the incense and the perfume. Oh, how Mary, retired in her cell at Nazareth, drew to herself the eyes of the Adorable Trinity.” And again : “ Would you know what your room is ? It is a little heaven, as St. Bernard calls it. What is there done in heaven that is not done in a cell ? There God is honoured, loved, served with all freedom ; there you converse with angels and saints, and you take ineffable delight in this conversation. There you sigh after the Divine Lover, you tell Him what you please, you speak to Him of your chaste love, you enjoy His favours. In fine, how great soever your solitude may be, remember that five persons are always present : God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, your guardian angel, and yourself. But remember also that beautiful saying of St. Gregory the Great : ‘ Of what avail is exterior solitude if that of the heart be not well kept ? ’ ” M. Dupont had long guarded well that solitude of the heart ; hence he was the better able to appreciate the solitude of his room. Unable either to read or write, or so much as to move in his chair, he was still always occupied, for he prayed without ceasing. Sometimes he would say, alluding to his

paralysed hands and feet, "I am nailed;" then, looking upwards and pointing to his heart with the hand which he could still partially move, he would give utterance to that aspiration so dear to him: "May I expire consumed with an ardent thirst to behold the desirable Face of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

He was to have one great consolation before he died. It had been the longing desire of his heart that the revelations of the Sister Saint-Pierre concerning reparation should be published to the world. But the Archbishop, Mgr. Morlot, although he professed the highest admiration and esteem for the saintly Carmelite, and was often even heard to declare that her inspirations seemed to him to come from God, had, after examining her writings and causing them to be examined by others, judged it prudent to have them all placed under seal, to be preserved in the archives of the Carmel and communicated to no one. None had submitted more unreservedly than had M. Dupont to this authoritative injunction of silence; and now twenty-six years had elapsed, and two archbishops had succeeded Mgr. de Morlot at Tours, without any attention being directed to Sister Saint-Pierre, or a thought of raising the veil which concealed her life and writings occurring to those in authority. This act was reserved for Mgr. Colet, who took possession of the see of St. Martin in 1875. Before the first year of his episcopate had closed, he empowered the Carmelites to break the seals and, after subjecting the writings of the venerable sister to a new and careful examination by the learned Benedictines of Solesme, authorised their publication. When M. Dupont received the glad news that the seals of secrecy had been at last removed, his countenance lighted up with joy, and,

raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "*Nunc dimittis* ; now I must depart."

Early in March, 1876, he had a fresh attack of paralysis, and from that day he was confined almost entirely to his bed. Lying thus, more and more alone with God and absorbed in Him, he seemed by prayer and contemplation to have attained to a foretaste of the peace of the beatific vision. He never was heard to speak of his own state save once, when he asked the doctor, De la Tremblaye, his faithful friend, as had been M. Bretonneau before him, whether he was near his end. One of the last words he spoke was to ask for the God of the Eucharist, a proof that he felt that death was approaching, for only a few days previous he had from humility declined an offer made to bring him the Viaticum. Now he asked for It himself. His cousin, Léon de Marolles, had arrived, and at ten o'clock on the following morning, which was that of Thursday, he said, "Léon, I have a commission to give you. I desire to have the good God." M. de Marolles did not catch his meaning, for his speech had now become difficult to understand except by those who were accustomed to him. Adèle approached. "What does Monsieur wish for?" she asked. "The good God," he replied eagerly, accompanying the words with an expressive gesture. She represented to him that it was rather late, fearing probably the exhaustion liable to increase with the advancing day, and that it might be better to wait until the following morning. "No," he replied, "at once, for that will be pleasing to our Lord." "Well, at once, then, Sir," said Adèle; "the priest shall be sent for, and then I will make ready a little wedding-feast (*une petite noce*), as we did for Madame." She alluded to the display of flowers and

lights which in Martinique it is customary to make on such occasions, and which M. Dupont himself had prepared with a certain solemnity at his mother's last communion. He bent his head in sign of acquiescence. One of the vicars of the cathedral sent word that he would come at a quarter before twelve. In the interval, M. Dupont frequently inquired when he was coming, while Adèle hastened on the preparations, fearing greatly that in his feeble condition her master would not be able to swallow the Sacred Host. But at five minutes to twelve she had the consolation of beholding him receive the Adorable Body of his beloved Lord with more facility than she had anticipated and in full possession of his faculties. He had great difficulty in speaking, but they could hear him murmuring prayers to himself, sometimes with closed eyes, sometimes with them open and raised to heaven.

It was not long before he entered on what may be called his agony, which lasted eight days. "I had the happiness," says one of those who were with him to the end, "to see M. Dupont on the Saturday, the 11th of March, about five o'clock in the afternoon. He had been placed in his arm-chair, where he reclined in much suffering, and powerless to move. I knelt and kissed his hands; that was my salutation to him. He made me sit down for a minute, and by signs and broken words gave me to understand that he was to receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction that evening." At seven o'clock he was placed on his bed, from which he was never more to rise, and at eight o'clock he was anointed by one of the vicars of the cathedral. He was perfectly conscious, and followed every part of the rite with the attention and piety habitual to him, his lips moving in unison with all the prayers, which,



indeed, he knew by heart, once even signing to the priest when he was inadvertently about to make some slight omission.

The few remaining days of M. Dupont's life were days of intense suffering. He lay extended on his bed as on a cross, incapable of the slightest movement. Some small power still remaining in his right hand, it was observed that, when the left, which was completely paralysed, slipped away from its position—for he kept both crossed over his bosom—he would use the other to replace it. Not a word of complaint ever passed his lips. Now and then Adèle would pass a sponge dipped in tepid water over his face and eyes, which he permitted her to do. "As you will, Adèle," he murmured; "you know that I have now no will of my own."

For the completion of his perfection, and to add a fresh jewel to his crown, God was pleased to permit that during his last hours he should, like his great patron and model, St. Martin, and so many other saints, suffer a final assault from Satan. It seemed as if the arch-enemy, who had undergone at M. Dupont's hands so many humiliating defeats, desired to take his revenge by troubling his last moments. One day it was observed that he who was invariably so calm and patient betrayed symptoms of violent agitation, as if he beheld some painful and odious object. This occurred several times, and, on being questioned, he acknowledged that the devil was tormenting him. At seven o'clock on the Monday evening preceding his death, "Adèle," he said all of a sudden, "only think—Satan has been making me promises! The wretch!" "Have no fear," replied his old servant, adopting her master's language, to which she was so well used; "you must say, *Vade retro, Satana*; and then," she

added, "we have a medal of St. Benedict." Recalling the example of St. Teresa, who found a little holy water sufficient to put the enemy to flight, he asked to have some sprinkled on him. "I took some holy water," said Adèle, "sprinkled it over him, and gave him some on his hand saying, 'Make the sign of the cross, Sir,' which he did immediately, and several times. Knowing that it would be agreeable to his wishes, and acting on the advice of a priest of the cathedral, at six o'clock the following evening she lighted a blessed candle which was kept in the house for that purpose ; and this practice was observed up to the moment of his death. Whenever the devil appeared to be renewing his temptations, the aspersions were repeated, till at length the baffled adversary departed, to trouble the holy man no more, who recovered that perfect peace which was never to leave him to the end.

There may seem to have been nothing remarkable in the death of this great Christian, save, perhaps, the sweet simplicity and serenity with which he met it ; but this assuredly was very remarkable. All were struck with the beauty of his countenance, so calm, so tranquil, in the midst of all his excruciating pains. Truly "patience" had a "perfect work" in him. Prayer was offered continually round his bed, for in the earlier stage of his illness he had often begged Adèle to pray, and he would make responses in a low voice. To the very last this faithful servant persevered in fulfilling the wishes of her revered master, and he would show by signs that he joined inwardly in the supplications which were being made for him. She continued to utter pious ejaculations according as they suggested themselves to her ; as, for example, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph ! My Jesus, mercy ! O holy Heart of Mary, be my salva-

tion !” “It was not I who prayed,” Adèle afterwards said, “it was my good angel.” Sometimes she would whisper in his ear, “Sir, I pray so badly ; do you understand me ?” and once he answered, “Go on praying like that ;” or again, fearing to weary him, she would take his hand and say, “Sir, do you understand me ? If you do, press my hand ;” and he pressed it. Thus he remained during the eight days of his mortal agony, lying on his back, perfectly conscious, but unable to move, and with his eyes almost always closed. There was no rattle in his throat, but his breathing was a little oppressed, being more a kind of panting, which, when he could no longer articulate, seemed to express his beloved aspiration to the Holy Face, which in heart, no doubt, he continued to repeat.

On the Friday evening, Adèle saw that the end was near ; controlling her emotion, she raised her voice, and bade him farewell in her own name and in those of his two other domestics, Zephyrin, who had been with him for fourteen years, and Adélaïde, his cook, who had served him for twenty-eight. Together they had formed his little adopted family, for he had always treated them more as his children than as his servants, and now all three, kneeling at his bedside, begged him not to forget them, promising to cherish the good example he had given them, in the hopes that God would grant them the grace to rejoin him one day in glory. His confessor came every day that he might enjoy anew the benefit of absolution. The prayers for a departing soul had been recited on several occasions when he appeared to be sinking, and on the Saturday morning they were again repeated. It was remarked that when the words *Beati immaculati in via* were pronounced, being the first of the

118th Psalm which he had loved so dearly and had made the constant subject of his meditation, a sweet and heavenly smile passed over his face, like that which he had himself observed on the countenance of his dying mother. One of the last words his confessor addressed to him was to recommend to his prayers himself and the people of Tours. "We have just been praying for you to St. Martin," he said, "in whom you have all your life placed so much confidence. Now you, in your turn, will pray for us in eternity." \*

Towards four o'clock in the morning of the 18th of March, the feast of the Archangel St. Gabriel, M. Dupont, having still his eyes closed, drew three long sighs at intervals. At the third, his cousin, Léon de Marolles, who had never left his bedside, said, with deep emotion, "He is gone!" It was, indeed, the last sigh of his holy relative before departing to the home of endless joy, where there is no more sighing or tears. He had never opened his eyes, nor was there any apparent struggle when the silver cord was broken, not so much as the slightest movement to betray the moment of separation; he died almost imperceptibly. His fine countenance was in death still invested with that look of angelic peace which during life had long borne witness that his soul had

\* The priest who attended M. Dupont on his deathbed was the Abbé Verdier. He had long been intimately acquainted with the holy man, and had been specially united with him in the work of St. Martin, so that it would be difficult to say which of the two laboured most strenuously in what they called the "Martinian cause." Tours has had lately to mourn the death of this excellent priest, who was canon of its cathedral church. Among M. Dupont's survivors, he was the one who, perhaps, knew him best, and to him the Abbé Janvier was indebted for many details which would otherwise have been lost. He died suddenly at Bourbon-l'Archambault on the 27th of May, the eve of Pentecost, 1882.

its abode more in heaven than on earth. He was seventy-nine years of age.

His body was laid out on a bed in his oratory, only a few steps from the venerated picture of the Holy Face ; in that very room which had for years been so crowded with pilgrims and supplicants, and where by his faith and fervent prayers he had obtained so many graces both of cure and of conversion. The colour of his face was but slightly changed, and they who looked upon him felt no sorrow or sadness, but rather a sweet emotion of joy and confidence. Crowds pressed in to take a last view of the holy man, and one who witnessed the scene declares that it would be impossible to describe their piety and recollection as they knelt in prayer round the mortal remains of him whom they already venerated as a protector and a saint. Rosaries, medals, prints, were brought in countless numbers to touch the face or hands of the dear departed ; and this concourse continued during the whole of the Saturday and Sunday, and until ten o'clock on Monday morning, the hour appointed for the funeral. His express desire had been that his obsequies should be conducted with the utmost simplicity and privacy. He had always felt a great aversion to a numerous attendance at funerals, and in his will he had conjured his cousin, Léon de Marolles, who was also his executor, not to concern himself about asking many persons to follow him to the grave. "It is useless," he said, "to summon from their avocations those who in church do not know how to pray. What is the good of making a momentary stir round a corpse, when it is sure to be speedily consigned to oblivion by those survivors who lack the gift of faith ? My whole ambition is limited to have, if it so pleases God, the help of some good souls who

in their charity will offer a communion for my intention ; myself raising before God that cry of distress which will issue from my heart at the moment of death : ‘ *Miseremini mei, miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei.* ’ ”

But it was to be quite otherwise. His funeral was a kind of religious triumph, one of those public demonstrations which are spontaneously elicited by eminent virtue and, above all, by sanctity. M. Dupont was followed to the grave, not only by all the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Tours, by the Vicars General and Metropolitan Chapter, but by the Prefect of Indre-et-Loire, and all the principal people of the town, who came to do him honour. An immense crowd of men and women of all conditions in life swelled the procession, accompanying the venerable remains from the door of the house in the Rue St. Etienne to the cathedral, and thence to the cemetery. The cathedral was as full as on days of high festival. Priests, religious, the nuns of the different communities, representatives of the charitable associations of the place, heads of factories and their workmen—all were there, as well as the poor in vast numbers, and, what constituted not the least touching portion of the assemblage, the orphans to whom he had always been as a father, and the old people of the Little Sisters. The Lord, who loves to exalt the humble, permitted that, to add to the pomp of the ceremony, it should be necessary, on account of the rising of the Loire, to make a long circuit and conduct the funeral procession over the great stone-bridge at the end of the Rue Royale. The venerable deceased had asked for a very simple burial. His wish was understood and carried out. A poor old man and a poor old woman from the

Little Sisters held the cords in front of the funeral car, and behind they were held by two little children from the Orphanage.

While the interment was taking place in the cemetery, some among the crowd were heard to say, "Is this a fitting place for so holy a man? He ought to be laid in a church." Others added, "A day will come when his body will be removed, and he will receive the honours he deserves." Such was the general feeling of the people, who had already canonised him in anticipation of what we may piously hope will one day be the judgment of the Church. He was buried, according to his desire, beside his mother and daughter, under the same gravestone, surmounted by a large cross. On it are inscribed his name and the date of his death : no more ; and all that distinguishes the tomb from many others is the *prie-dieu* of white marble which M. Dupont himself placed there at Henriette's death, and at which he so often knelt in prayer.

There is no true portrait existing of the holy man. There had been a small one painted on wood, which was a tolerably good likeness of him as he was in his youth, but, setting little value on it, he had given it to his servant Adèle. Towards the close of his life, however, it occurred to him that when he was gone, some use might be made of the picture which it was not agreeable to him to think of, so, one day, when Adèle was out, he went into her room, removed it from the place where it was hung up, and threw it into the fire ; after which exploit he sat down in his accustomed chair with considerable satisfaction. Presently Adèle returned, and immediately perceived that the precious portrait had disappeared. Entering her master's room,



she loudly complained and lamented her loss, but met with no compassion from M. Dupont, who, rubbing his hands and laughing heartily, pointed to the smouldering remains of the frame in his grate. He never allowed his photograph to be taken, but an imperfect one was executed after his death, aided by which and by memory a friendly hand designed the picture and the bust which may be seen in his "mortuary chamber." As works of art they are highly commendable, but as likenesses they are not equally successful. The picture in the vestibule, at the entrance of the Oratory, is the work of an able artist, M. Lafon. It represents him in death, his head resting on the pillow of his couch, on which he appears to be sleeping. It is the repose of the just awaiting the resurrection. "A ray of heavenly joy"—to adopt the Abbé Janvier's imagery—"seems to play over those closed eyes and lips: it is a reflection of the picture of the Holy Face, which the artist by a veritable stroke of genius has represented as hovering aloft in the dim mysterious distance. It would not be possible to give a more striking or a more charming illustration of those words which this grand Christian so frequently repeated: 'May I expire consumed with an ardent thirst to behold the desirable Face of our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE MAN AND HIS CRITICS.

THOSE who remember M. Dupont in the prime of life describe him as having a fine and well-proportioned figure, the effect of which was enhanced by a certain

air of dignity and command. He had a bright, clear eye, an ample forehead, from which the hair had even then retreated, regular features stamped with a true nobility. His countenance, which habitually wore a calm and serene expression, reflected nevertheless in a lively manner all the different emotions of his soul, recalling that of the holy Pontiff, Pius IX., so very sweet and tranquil, and yet so sympathetic and responsive. When the holy man was kneeling in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, or at the altar rails about to receive communion, or, again, when making his thanksgiving afterwards, his face was sometimes seen to glow with a sort of "phosphorescent light"—such is the term used by an ecclesiastic who had himself witnessed it more than once—a radiation, as it were, from his soul transfigured by grace. A writer who saw him in his later years said of him, "An abiding sense of the presence of God imparted to his whole bearing an imposing majesty. His face shone at times with a solemn light which inspired respect."

His gestures, in speaking, were perfectly natural, but often singularly graphic and picturesque, which added greatly to the interest of his narrations and descriptions. He had a habit of expressing admiration or surprise by extending his arms and raising his eyes to heaven, while a shrug of the shoulders was his ordinary way of testifying indifference or disdain. When relating to his friends any discomfiture of Satan, the "old one," as he called him, he would throw himself back in his chair, laughing joyously and rubbing his hands. We have already noticed his perfect tact and courtesy in all companies and under all circumstances; his manners were those of the best society, polished and refined, but free from the slightest shade of affectation.

His attire, as we have already had occasion to mention, was plain and simple; always neat, scrupulously clean, and suitable to his rank in life. Wrapped in a long overcoat, with deep pockets and wide sleeves, he walked with a recollected air and a quick step; never, however, so absorbed but that he would discern from afar the approach of friends or acquaintances, and would cordially salute them—never more graciously, observes M. Aubineau, than when leaving church after having received communion—detaining them awhile if he had anything to tell—some pious anecdote or edifying piece of news—or, it might be, to quote a verse of Scripture or a passage from the Office for the day, if they were ecclesiastics or religious. To him, says the Abbé Janvier, might truly be applied those words of the Prophet Isaias: “*Honorabilem vultu et prudentem eloquii mystici*—Honourable in countenance and skilful in mystical speech.”\*

From what has been said it will appear that if M. Dupont sought no one, he avoided no one; his perfection was not that of the recluse, but of the man of the world, of which he offered, though unconsciously, the accomplished model. The style of his conversation, as noticed more than once, was lively, cheerful, almost playful, seasoned with wit and with a certain spice of originality which lent a charm to what he said. But this cheerfulness, and even gaiety, of spirit, it must be understood, was not the mere result of natural temperament; it was cultivated by him on principle. To be cheerful and gay was a duty with him, and, doubtless, he often talked when, if he had indulged his personal inclinations, he would rather have held his tongue.

\* Isaias iii. 3.

In him would seem to be fully realised the teaching of the son of Sirach : "The joyfulness of the heart is the life of a man, and a never-failing treasure of holiness ; and the joy of a man is length of life. Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God, and contain thyself ; gather up thy heart in His holiness ; and drive away sadness far from thee." \* To the irreligious and the sceptical he spoke out his mind frankly and forcibly, unless discretion or charity dictated otherwise, when he would shut himself up in closest reserve and absolute silence.

He was popularly called "the holy man" even during his lifetime, and this was so well known that one day, when a letter was received at the Post Office with this sole address, "To the holy man at Tours," it was forwarded at once, as a matter of course, to the Pilgrim of the Rue St. Etienne. And not the common people only, but men eminent for their virtues and intellectual attainments used the same language concerning him. "How often," writes a lady, "have I heard Père Eymard, himself of saintly memory, exclaim, as he left M. Dupont's house, 'What a man you have there ! what a saint !'" The Abbé Janvier mentions also a distinguished Father of the Society of Jesus, who often spoke of M. Dupont in precisely similar terms. "You have a saint at Tours," he said one day to some one. "I never quit his house after conversing with him without admiring the treasures of science and of piety which he draws from the Holy Scriptures." The Coadjutor of Bordeaux, Mgr. de la Bouillerie, communicated to the Abbé a little incident which occurred to himself, as being illustrative of the widespread belief in his sanctity. He had just been

\* Ecclus. xxx. 23, 24.

appointed bishop of Carcassonne, and was about to repair to his diocese, when a poor girl who was lying sick in one of the hospitals of Paris, and had been for some time under his direction, asked him whether she might not write to M. Dupont, of whom she had heard so many wonderful things. The Bishop assured her that there could be no possible objection to her doing so, and gave her his address; upon which in all simplicity the good girl said, "Father, must I not direct my letter to M. Dupont, Thaumaturgus, at Tours?" This appellation had evidently come to be considered as a proper appendage to his name, and descriptive of his profession. The Prelate added that he had only once enjoyed the happiness of conversing with the holy man, but that from even one short interview he became perfectly convinced that his beautiful soul was most intimately united to God.

We cannot complete our portrait of this wonderful and wonder-working man without adverting to the single reproach with which criticism has ventured to assail him—that of exaggeration, and of having what the French call a *tête exaltée*; in other words, that he allowed himself to be carried away by his exalted religious enthusiasm beyond the bounds prescribed by right reason. It is difficult to meet such a charge when made in general terms, if it were only for the patent fact that the standard of what is supposed to be reasonable in these matters is a shifting one, varying indefinitely in men's minds. Can any instance, however, be alleged in which M. Dupont was considered to have erred in this respect? No one, it is clear, ought to be taxed with blamable enthusiasm who is never led to transgress the limits of that obedience and submission which is due to religious superiors, or to offend

against that charity which is due to our neighbour. Now, his letters abound with examples of the deference with which he always awaited the decisions of ecclesiastical authority, and in particular where it was question of any alleged occurrence of the supernatural order, as also of the advice which he urged upon friends in respect to the caution to be observed in doubtful cases. Moreover, abundant evidence meets us everywhere of the charitable prudence, discretion, and consideration which guided and moderated all his dealings with others. Had he, indeed, been in the habit of indulging an intemperate zeal, and giving way to a flighty enthusiasm, never would his society have been so valued and sought after as we have seen it to be.

If, however, it be meant, as is probably the case, that his faith in the power of God and of His saints, his reliance on the efficacy of prayer, his hatred of the devil and his agents, and his pious ardour for all that concerned the external worship of God, especially that paid to the Adorable Eucharist, were excessive, we do not care to defend him. These excesses, these follies, as the world deems them, are dear to God, and have always been characteristic of the saints in all ages, to whom, indeed, they have been made matter of reproach by the incredulous and the indifferent of their day. But M. Dupont, it may still be said, was certainly an enthusiast. He would go into raptures about some simple passing incident, and think he discerned the action of God in events which to others wore a very ordinary appearance, or he would perceive supernatural analogies and resemblances which delighted him, in little things; while to them these discoveries and comparisons seemed either trivial or far-fetched. Perhaps there is no term more ambiguous in its applica-

tion than that of enthusiasm. There is an enthusiasm which resides chiefly in the imagination and partially also in the sensitive nature. It is a shallow feeling, easily excited, particularly in the young and the ardent. Though harmless in its origin, there is a danger lest it may lead to presumption, deluding the person possessed by it into the persuasion that he is something which he is not, and capable of accomplishing all the grand things which he admires and which agitate the surface of his soul. Such, assuredly, was not the enthusiasm of M. Dupont. But there is another enthusiasm, springing from that fuller perception of the beauty of spiritual things which is the accompaniment of a high advancement in grace. To souls thus advanced the invisible world and all the mysteries of our holy faith shine out with a lustre which frequently elicits from them expressions which would be exaggerated in the mouth of an ordinary Christian, whose inner eye is not thus opened and enlightened. The same interior illumination makes them alive to the slightest shades of resemblance and connection, and introduces them into a world the mystical harmonies of which are unintelligible to the vulgar, and are very faintly recognised save by the chosen few.

A parallel result may be noticed in the natural order ; in the case of the painter, the poet, the accomplished musician, and, generally, in every man of genius. He has perceptions of beauty beyond the ken of less gifted or less cultivated mortals, and people never think of passing any censure on the enthusiasm which this vision and revelation of the lovely and the sublime awakens in such men, although their own senses may not be exercised to perceive it or, perhaps, are incapable of doing so. In like manner, the artist is quick to



detect resemblances where others are blind, and can recognise the touch of a master's hand even in a single stroke of the brush, and thus what are trifles to others become pregnant truths to him. Such, then, in another sphere, was M. Dupont's enthusiasm. Gifted with a highly impressionable and sympathetic soul, he was readily transported with joy at anything, however trifling in its nature, wherein he perceived the action of grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, and he was most keenly alive to that action in all around him. The bursts of enthusiasm thus excited were not mere ebullitions of fervour, in which sentiment and fancy had more part than reason, but proceeded from supernatural motives as solid as they were genuine.

An instance may here be recorded in illustration. One day, when there was a considerable number of persons in the room and prayers were about to begin, two working-men came to the house to be cured of their maladies. M. Dupont was struck with something strange in their manner as they entered; he questioned them, and from the very first words they uttered, he perceived that they were not in the least aware what sort of place they were in, but thought that he was some sort of a quack doctor. The servant of the Holy Face then explained to them that cures were obtained there only by prayer. The poor creatures were fairly puzzled, for they had completely lost all notion of religion. So, bidding them be seated, M. Dupont began patiently to instruct them, passing in review the chief dogmas of the faith and the commandments and precepts, until he arrived at confession. Up to that moment they had listened readily, but when the sacrament of penance was explained to them, they began to shake their heads and mutter to themselves. M. Dupont re-

commenced his explanation, insisting on the necessity of confession, and showing its salutary and consoling effects ; but they still continued protesting. Then, raising his voice, he exclaimed, "And yet, there is nothing so very hard in throwing yourself at the feet of a minister of God, and saying to him, 'Pray, father, give me your blessing, for I have sinned.' " "Oh, no, indeed," cried out an old peasant with a venerable grey head, in his simple *patois*, from the other end of the room, "sure enough, that is not hard ; and we may very well believe that it was not men who invented *that*. Men ! Why men would have made us say, 'Father, punish me, for I have sinned,' but the good God makes us say, 'Father, bless me, for I have sinned.' " M. Dupont immediately rose from his seat and, approaching the peasant with that air of native dignity which was all his own, he took the old man's head in his hands, and said, "Let me kiss the brow wherein the Holy Spirit has conceived so beautiful a thought." Let this be taken as a specimen of M. Dupont's enthusiasm. It was thus that he could feel and admire. An ordinary Christian would have contented himself with saying, "My good man, you are quite right ; that was well spoken on your part." And this would have been as much as was natural in the mouth of an ordinary good Christian.

True it is that M. Dupont may have sometimes been led into error as to the value of certain facts, and been over-hopeful as to their probable religious bearing, but this cannot be imputed to him as a fault, or attributed to any false enthusiasm ; in such cases he had either been misinformed, or been imperfectly informed, as to the facts themselves, or he believed persons to be led by the Spirit of God in what they were doing, or were

likely to do, when they were actuated by quite another spirit and by worldly motives. Such mistakes are inseparable from human imperfection, and in M. Dupont were often referable to those very virtues which he so eminently possessed; particularly to his charity, which made him credit others with sentiments similar to his own. He had truly the charity of which the Apostle speaks, which "believeth all things and hopeth all things."

Matter for this charge of exaggeration has been found in M. Dupont's constant reference to the finger of God in every the minutest event, and to the never-ceasing activity of the arch-enemy, Satan. But, when examined, to what does such a charge amount? There is a Providence, or there is not a Providence. God rules the world, or He leaves it to itself. Now, if He does rule it, as Christians believe, must not His action intervene in every event, however trifling? God is not like an earthly monarch, who is incapable of attending to all the minutiae of government, and can only give his direct attention to the most weighty affairs. Our Lord tells us that the very hairs of our head are numbered by our Heavenly Father; that He decks the lilies of the field in their beauty; and that even a sparrow does not fall to the ground without His permission.\* And again, is not Satan designated in Scripture as the "prince of this world,"† and that by the very lips of Him who is the Truth? Does not St. Peter say that he "goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour;" and does not St. Paul call him "the prince of the power of this air," and assert that our warfare is "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against

\* St. Matthew x. 29, 30; vi. 28, 29.

† St. John xiv. 30.

the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places?"\* What did M. Dupont say concerning Satan that was stronger or more startling than is implied in these words of Holy Writ? But to a materialistic age such ideas are most repugnant, and sure to draw ridicule on one who is constantly bringing them into notice and practically acting on them. Even the children of the Church, living in an atmosphere so pernicious to faith, are apt to become more or less infected by it, and accustomed to speak, and to form their notions and opinions, according to the spirit of the world rather than according to the teaching of the Gospel.

That, as years rolled on and grace perfected its work in the holy man's soul, he may also have advanced in judgment and Christian prudence when advocating the truths of which he was jealous, would in itself be highly probable, even apart from the testimony of his historian to this effect. But during the last fifteen or twenty years of his life, this spiritual pruning may be said to have completed its work, and no one could with justice have accused M. Dupont of the slightest deficiency in discretion and reserve, while priests eminent for their theological knowledge and experience in the things of God have borne witness to the singular accuracy of his thoughts and language when dealing with passages of Scripture or points of doctrine. Among others, Dom Guéranger more than once expressed his admiration on this head to the Abbé Janvier. The fame of M. Dupont's sanctity brought him applications from many individuals—laymen, priests, and religious—who were bent upon undertaking some work or promoting some new devotion, often with an eccentric

\* 1 St. Peter v. 8; Ephes. ii. 2, vi. 12.

or excessive zeal, and who desired to consult him or to win him over to their views. In like manner, devout ladies or religious, whose imaginations were captivated by some chimerical project or extravagant notion, would write to him for light, encouragement, or consolation. His historian tells us that he had in his hands many letters written by M. Dupont in reply to such persons, and that what struck him most forcibly in these confidential communications, often mere short notes, was the sobriety of language, the calmness, the prudence combined with the most delicate charity, which characterised them, and, above all, his open, firm, and marked opposition to all which appeared to him excessive and exaggerated, and which, for that reason alone, he judged to be erroneous and impracticable. His good sense, humility, and right-mindedness are stamped on every line. He perceived at a glance the weak point in whatever was proposed to him, however plausible an appearance of zeal and piety the project might wear, and strangers engrossed with theoretical plans, who came to consult him, making sure of meeting with his warm support, would retire from the interview, disappointed, indeed, in this respect, but astonished at the perspicacity of his spiritual insight and the rectitude of his judgment. "No," says the Abbé, "it is not in vain that this great servant of the Holy Face so often repeated that invocation of our Lord: *Faciem tuam illumina super servum tuum, et doce me justificationes tuas*. The spirit of wisdom and of counsel with which he was replenished proves that his prayer was granted."

It was, perhaps, the wisdom which guided his whole conduct, and the prudence of the advice which he gave to others, which contributed as much and even more

than the miraculous favours accorded to his prayers to win for him his great reputation for sanctity, a reputation which, forming itself gradually around him during life and finding expression in the name appropriated to him, has, since his death, spread and increased every year; a proof, if other evidence were wanting, that it was grounded on his eminently solid merits. The Abbé Janvier assures us that, to his knowledge, not a single person, to whatever class he may have belonged and in whatever state of mind he may have found himself, had ever cause to repent having consulted M. Dupont or followed his advice and direction. Those even who did not share the fervour of his enthusiasm, or the generous boldness of his faith, could not withhold their homage to his virtues. They, too, joined in the one universal chorus of praise which proclaimed M. Dupont a man of God and a saint. Such was the judgment, as we have seen, wrung, as it were, by deep conviction from the lips of the Abbé Boullay, when in the very act of censuring him: "M. Dupont is right; we cannot have too much faith. He is a saint, let us imitate him."

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE WORK OF THE HOLY FACE.

M. DUPONT had departed. But the eyes of the Catholics of Tours turned with eager interest to the house in the Rue St. Etienne, where he had dwelt amongst them for forty-five years, and which had been glorified by so many miracles. What was to become of it, and what was to become of the venerable picture

before which these wonders had been wrought? The holy man had never during his lifetime said or done anything to solve this question. He left a will, explicit in all its provisions, and had added codicils bequeathing certain pious objects which belonged to him. His great Bible, in particular, with the desk supporting it, he left to the Curé of his parish, Arch-priest of the Cathedral, expressing an opinion, which was equivalent to a desire, that it might find a place of honour in the *salon* of his presbytery, and continue to have a lamp burning night and day before it. "The sight of the Holy Scriptures," he added, "moves to good thoughts, and their study floods the soul with lights. M. le Curé and his vicaires know this better than I do." But concerning the picture of the Holy Face he left no instructions. His confidence in God and the supernatural prudence which ruled his acts seem to have dictated the following words: "It is from no forgetfulness on my part, if I do not speak in my will of the Holy Face. I do not wish to take part in the questions which may arise, when I am no longer there to trim the lamps of my oratory. God will provide for this according to His Holy Will." His confidence was abundantly vindicated. In consequence of family arrangements, the house in the Rue St Etienne had to be sold. This was publicly known, and much anxiety was felt lest this holy place should pass into careless or profane hands; an anxiety, however, speedily relieved by the announcement that it had been purchased by a religious community. It was the Carmelite nuns who, notwithstanding their poverty, were enabled, by providentially favourable circumstances, to become the owners of it and, by this means, the worthy inheritors of the great work of



reparation which had taken its rise amongst themselves. Henceforth the Holy Face and Carmel were to be inseparably united.

It is easy to imagine how great must have been the joy of these religious at this acquisition, a joy shared by all the good Catholics of Tours. The Archbishop, Mgr. Colet, on his part, not satisfied with having authorised and encouraged the Reverend Mother, Teresa of St. Joseph, Prioress of the Carmelite convent, to make this generous venture, hastened to give proof of his own fervent devotion to the Holy Face, and of his veneration for the memory of the great Christian who had died, as he said, "in the odour of sanctity," by converting into a chapel the oratory where (to adopt the terms of his *ordonnance*) "the servant of God for so many years kept a lamp burning day and night before a representation of the Holy Face of our Lord, and where so many marvellous facts, attested by the voice of the public, have been wrought in consequence of anointing with the oil of the lamp." He also announced that he would himself in person solemnly bless and inaugurate it.

A few words may here be given descriptive of the new sanctuary as it was when blessed by the Archbishop and as it actually exists at the present time. The chapel consists of a certain portion properly called the Oratory, to which two side chapels have been added—the one dedicated to Our Lady of the Seven Dolours and the other to St. Peter penitent. The Oratory itself is formed out of the old *salon* of M. Dupont and his dining-room thrown into one by removal of the partition-wall, which has furnished the opportunity of adopting an architectural arrangement similar to what may be seen in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, namely, a succes-

sion of isolated pillars united by a balustrade. Over the altar of ebony, which is relieved by gilding, and in a niche above the Tabernacle is an image of the Ecce Homo. This altar covers the marble chimneypiece and the stone flag on which M. Dupont used to kneel in the midst of the pilgrims. The precious picture, so celebrated, retains its position and hangs on the right side of the altar. The old frame of black wood has not been removed, but the Christian Mothers of Tours have given another magnificent frame of gilt bronze, studded with jewels, in which it is enclosed. The very same lamp which M. Dupont used still burns before it, with the addition of two chandeliers, and beneath the picture are these words: *Ostende Faciem tuam et salvi erimus*.\* A number of *ex-votos* suspended around form a species of corona to it. On the left, the Epistle side, is displayed the Banner of the Sacred Heart, the *fac-simile* of that glorious standard which accompanied the Zouaves of Charette to the battle-field of Patay. Beside it are M. Dupont's great desk and open Bible, his right to which was resigned by the Curé of St. Gatien, to whom the holy man had bequeathed it. It continues, as heretofore, to be honoured by a perpetual lamp. St. Martin has not been forgotten. He has his image near the altar on the other side of the Holy Face. Upon the walls are painted in appropriate situations, after the pattern of those which may be seen in the rooms of St. Ignatius and St. Philip Neri at Rome, pious sentences and inscriptions, which recall the virtues and the devotions of the servant of God; and still more touching mementos of himself and of his work are the groups of sticks and crutches ranged

\* "Show us Thy Face, and we shall be saved."

on each side of the altar, attesting the miraculous cures obtained through his prayers.

The blessing and opening of the Oratory was fixed by the Archbishop himself for the 29th of June; the venerable prelate selecting that day as being the feast of the Prince of the Apostles, patron of "that fervent religious who," as he said, "had inspired the work of reparation and the touching form in which it had been accomplished for so many years in this ever-blessed place." He officiated in person, as he had promised, and was thus the first to celebrate Mass on the new altar. The ceremony was performed with much splendour in the presence of almost all the clergy of Tours and many other priests, the superiors of the different religious communities, and a very large concourse of the faithful, all rejoicing at witnessing the episcopal act by which the house of this pious layman, hitherto only a sanctuary of private devotion, was transformed into a public oratory consecrated to works of reparation. This great object was so fully present to the mind of the venerable prelate that he at once erected in it the confraternity in reparation of blasphemy and profanation of the Sunday, which, according to rule, was affiliated to the Archconfraternity of St. Dizier, for the establishment of which M. Dupont, seconding the desire of Sister Saint-Pierre, had laboured with so much zeal. But, availing himself of his episcopal right, and wishing to bring the spirit and form of the said association into closer conformity with the character and object assigned to the new oratory, Mgr. Colet made some notable modifications in its rules as regarded the particular *cultus* of adoration, prayer, and love which it was proposed publicly to pay to the Face of our Lord, outraged and disfigured in His Passion. By thus converting it into

a special confraternity under the title and "in honour of the Holy Face," he may be regarded as having completed and carried out the devout aspirations of M. Dupont and of Sister Saint-Pierre, and as having placed in full relief what had hitherto been left partially in the shade. He was the first to inscribe his name on the register of associates, at the same time naming a chaplain for the service of the Oratory, with full powers, as director, to aggregate to the Confraternity the faithful of both sexes. While, therefore, the general object of this confraternity is to make reparation for the blasphemies, profanations, and impieties of secret societies, and all the crimes daily committed against the rights of God and of His Holy Church, its distinctive characteristic consists in the means which it adopts to attain this end. Each associate accordingly, by the fact of his admission, purposes to devote himself for life and death to the worship of the merciful and compassionate Face of the Saviour, considering that Adorable Face as the exterior and sensible sign of reparation. He engages to respect, and, as far as he can, cause to be respected by those dependent upon him, the Most Holy Name of the Lord and the days consecrated to His service. What he is unable to prevent, he at least desires to repair by prayers and interior acts, and especially by this invocation: "O God, our Protector, look upon us, and turn Thine eyes on the Face of Thy Christ." He must unite himself, in spirit at least, with the prayers every day offered in the Oratory of Reparation, when the Litanies of the Holy Face, composed by Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre and approved by ecclesiastical authority, are recited. He must habitually wear, if possible, the little cross of the Confraternity, on which is engraved the Holy Face, together with the words:

*Vade retro, Satana, and Sit nomen Domini benedictum.* A short rule for the associates was printed with episcopal authorisation, as well as a manual of prayers suitable for their use.

By these different acts, the *cultus* of reparation to the Holy Face—that devotion so dear to M. Dupont—only three months after his death entered on a new phase. It had been sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority and become invested with a public character. Henceforth it could be the object of a liturgical and regular pilgrimage. Soon the one chaplain became quite insufficient for the task assigned to him, and the Oratory too small for the crowds which thronged it, priests and religious coming in almost uninterrupted succession to celebrate Mass, and the faithful to receive communion, to offer their prayers and beg for graces. The resort of pilgrims to the Holy Face, which had greatly diminished of late years and had often been even altogether suspended, now received a new and powerful impulse. Moreover, there was every prospect of its increase. A more complete organisation, therefore, became necessary. Under these circumstances, the Archbishop resolved to carry out an idea which he had already conceived, of instituting a society of priests devoted to the worship of the Holy Face, and specially charged with the service of the Oratory and the assistance of the pilgrims. This accordingly he did, and bestowed on the ecclesiastics whom he appointed the title of Priests of the Holy Face, just as there are Priests of the Sacred Heart and Priests of the Blessed Sacrament. Without imposing on them as yet any special vow, he constituted them as a community, with a rule suited at once to the contemplative and the active life. They were, above all, to

make it their occupation to study, contemplate, and adore the Most Holy Face of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as to lead others to know and adore It, and thus to labour by all possible means to spread this salutary devotion. With this view they live in M. Dupont's house, and are consequently close to his Oratory, being at the disposal of all who present themselves, whether to give them instructions, or to aid them in obtaining a share in the graces of the holy place of which they are the guardians. They keep a register in which they enter the requests for prayers and the different recommendations communicated to them. These recommendations are read twice a day; in the morning after the principal Mass of the community, and in the evening after the five o'clock service. Every day at the same hour there is a recitation of the Litanies of the Holy Face, composed by Sister Saint-Pierre,\* together with prayers for the intentions of those who have made the recommendations. On Thursday there is a special recommendation in favour of the children and youth in the schools.

The Priests of the Holy Face apply themselves also to everything needed for promoting the work to which they are devoted, whether it be preaching, the administration of the sacraments, or epistolary correspondence. They forward on request little bottles of the oil,† as M. Dupont used to do, as also books, fly-leaves containing prayers, and other devotional objects connected with the worship of the Holy Face

\* These Litanies will be found at the end of the volume.

† In a letter to the present writer, the Abbé Janvier says that the bottles of oil can only be forwarded by hand, as occasion offers, even in France, and that the English Custom-House does not allow them to pass. It is, however, possible, through the kindness of

or the memory of the servant of God. They also place on record any facts which come to their knowledge concerning the virtues, miracles, and actions of that great Christian. Regarding M. Dupont as their founder and venerating him as a father, while awaiting the time when it may please God to permit them by the authority of the Church to pay him a higher homage, the Priests of the Holy Face, after his example, labour to propagate the use of the medal of St. Benedict, as well as devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of the Seven Dolours, to St. Michael, St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Martin, and St. Louis. Above all, like him, they devote themselves to the adoration of the Divine Eucharist, for which that pious layman manifested a love so tender and so enlightened. The work of the Nocturnal Adoration, which he established at Tours, is under their direction and is localised in their oratory. They preside over the exercises, say the four o'clock morning Mass, give the evening conferences and the morning meditations. The Adoration takes place weekly every Tuesday night, as in M. Dupont's time, and is prolonged on the Wednesday until five o'clock in the evening, when it is concluded with an instruction and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. They also educate in their house a certain number of children, who thus constitute a sort of clerical school, forming part of the Work and facilitating vocations to the ecclesiastical state, which, with the excellent training they receive under the fostering influence of the Divine Face and the patronage of the Holy Man

the directors, to obtain by post leaves of prayer to the Holy Face stained with the oil from the lamp kept ever burning before It in the Oratory at Tours.



of Tours, we may confidently expect to be numerous. Finally, the Priests of the Holy Face are at the disposal of the Archbishop, who is their superior, for any good work in which their aid may be profitable, and especially for temporarily supplying the place of sick priests in country places, which charitable service is, indeed, reckoned among the secondary objects of their calling, and is thoroughly consonant with the spirit of reparation.

“We were no sooner installed,” says the Abbé Janvier, who was one of the two Priests of the Holy Face first established at the Oratory, the pecuniary resources of the diocese not allowing of more in the first instance—“we were no sooner installed than we seemed sensibly to recognise the finger of God in all that occurs in this holy place. As much and more than during the life-time of M. Dupont, his little oratory is a centre of adoration, supplication, thanksgiving, and holy works of reparation, pilgrims flocking thither unceasingly from all parts, not only of France, but of every country in the world. From England, from Poland, from America, from Cochin China, come applications to be affiliated to the Confraternity, and to participate in the prayers and merits of the Work. Twice a day the Litanies of the Holy Face are publicly recited, and sometimes with a large attendance of the faithful. Innumerable petitions are being constantly received, and often very touching thanksgivings. Fresh *ex-voto* offerings arrive from time to time as tokens of gratitude to be added to those which surround the venerable picture. Pilgrimages, organised with some solemnity, are made at stated seasons. Thus, during the closing weeks of Lent, being Passion time, the parishes of the town and most of the communities

and schools are in the habit of making pilgrimages of penance and public expiation. That of the men on the evening of Good Friday is every year performed by a crowd of earnest and most edifying worshippers. On this day, and on other special occasions, these men of the world, responding in hundreds to the appeal addressed to them, seem anxious to prove that they have not forgotten the virtues of M. Dupont, their fellow-citizen and friend." The Abbé then proceeds to notice what has been already mentioned, the devotion of the Nocturnal Adoration practised once a week, in pious expectation of the time when the desires of the servant of God may be realised by its being made perpetual. There is one striking fact connected with the Oratory which must not be passed over, and that is "the irresistible attraction, an attraction full of sweetness and unction, which," as the Abbé observes, "souls experience in this holy place. Not only do the faithful of all ages and conditions who come here to pray experience it, but priests and religious, accustomed to those emotions which are awakened by divine things, loudly proclaim that this little sanctuary has for them a charm and a grace of peace difficult to meet with elsewhere, and which they attribute to the memory of the great Christian whose abode it has been." A venerable canon from one of the northern dioceses, after a visit to this holy spot, thus expresses himself on the subject: "To tell of the supernatural influences which are there experienced would be impossible. I could not restrain my tears when I entered this devout sanctuary and during the too short visit I made there; and something of the same effect is produced whenever I recall it to memory. I never felt anything so sweet or so strong of the kind save at Paray-le-Monial."

And how many more have received similar impressions !

Letters arrive daily, often from distant lands, soliciting favours of all kinds. The name of the holy man is constantly mentioned with gratitude, praise, and admiration, and often his prayers are invoked and his aid and counsel asked, just as if he were still present on earth or were one of the blessed in Heaven. He is called "the saint," "the holy man," "St. Dupont." Those who saw him in his last illness still speak of the impression then made upon them. "I shall never forget," writes the Abbé Joseph Lemann to the Abbé Janvier, "the pressure of the hand which I received from the dear sufferer, and the look of love he raised towards heaven, when, alluding to his approaching end, I said, 'During your whole life you have adored the Holy Face. Well, now you have a right to the Heart.' Oh, yes, from the Holy Face he must have passed into the Heart of his God !" The same good priest says that M. Dupont was "the man of the Two Testaments : of the one by the Bible, with which he was thoroughly conversant, of the other by the Holy Face. And indeed in his very person he combined something of the venerable majesty of the patriarch with the inexhaustible charity of the apostle. "I knew him to be near his end," he continues. "One of his hands was paralysed ; with the other, which was free, he sought for two prayers and gave them to me, expressing a desire that I should make them known if I thought them worthy of doing good to souls. Do I, indeed, judge them to be worthy ? They are two sighs of fire. One is the sigh of his soul deprived of daily communion ; the other is the sigh of his soul as if it were already in the other world, but deprived for a time of Paradise. I do not

think that the good God will have allowed him to offer that second prayer." This is also the universal opinion, and it has been more than once necessary, out of respect for the laws of the Church, to restrain the popular impulse and prevent certain demonstrations in his honour which it was desired to make at his tomb. The Church, as need hardly be said, does not object to the private invocation of his name, or to prayers offered secretly at his grave, and it may be said that the confidence reposed in him has not been disappointed, as the numerous cures, conversions, and other signal favours obtained, as is believed, through his intercession, abundantly testify. Many of these favours granted on the simple application of the oil or of a print of the Holy Face are nevertheless attributed to the holy man, for his name is always associated therewith, and the oil is commonly called "the oil of M. Dupont." Upon this subject it is not for us to pronounce any judgment so long as authority has not spoken, but a few instances of recent cures may here be subjoined.

In the year 1878, a young person of Orleans who had totally lost the use of her hands and feet was perfectly cured after having invoked M. Dupont and prayed at his tomb. She was able to come in person and offer in thanksgiving two handsome crutches which may be seen in the sanctuary. On the 18th of March, 1880, being the anniversary of the death of M. Dupont, a Dominican nun of Chinon, who had also lost the use of her limbs for eight years, was instantaneously and completely cured, and that, too, at the very hour when she knew that the servant of God had breathed his last sigh. A young woman, affected in her mind, and who had been subjected in a lunatic asylum at Paris to special medical treatment, suddenly

recovered her reason during a novena of Masses, prayers, and anointings, M. Dupont being invoked by name. An inhabitant of Upper Alsace, aged 35, had an enormous inward tumour. A dangerous and painful operation was judged to be necessary. He applied the oil, invoking M. Dupont, and promised to make a pilgrimage to his tomb. All pain ceased, and the tumour itself disappeared in the course of a few days. In the month of August, 1880, he accomplished his vow, and had a Mass of thanksgiving offered at the altar of the Holy Face. Shortly before, an elderly lady of Rennes had fulfilled a similar promise in gratitude for the recovery of her sight, which was almost totally gone, by the use of the oil and the invocation of M. Dupont. A little boy twelve years old, who could only drag himself along on two crutches, after a novena of prayers and anointing, cried out, "I am cured," and began to run about in the sacristy. His mother, in a transport of joy, exclaimed, "I give him to M. Dupont;" and the child, now enjoying perfect health, was soon afterwards admitted as choir-boy by the Priests of the Holy Face. Examples might easily be multiplied; and, indeed, the plates of rose-coloured marble, already so numerous along the wall of the side chapel of St. Peter, are undeniable testimonies to the frequency of the favours bestowed.\*

A correspondent of the *Weekly Register* and a personal friend of M. Dupont records, on the 26th of June, 1881, the following grace obtained, as he believes, through his intercession. "On the 11th of October,

\* The *Annales de la Sainte Face*, of which a monthly issue began in June, 1882, under the direction of the Priests of the Holy Face, may be referred to for an account of all the more recent cures, as well as for other interesting matter connected with the Work.

1878," he says, "in Florence, my late beloved mother had been in the morning to Holy Communion, and was returning at half-past ten o'clock to a later Mass. She was thrown down by a carriage of which the horse was suddenly stopped, although at full gallop. Her garments were torn to shreds, but she had only suffered from a slight wound on the forehead, which soon healed. The doctor and the police, who made a public declaration of the fact, said it was unaccountable how the lady had not been crushed to death. The truth is this. My sister, a Benedictine nun at Princethorpe, moved by some secret inspiration, was at that same moment in chapel reciting the Litanies of the Holy Face, adding at every invocation, 'M. Dupont, watch over my mother.' O mysteries of intercessory prayer, that knows no distance, you united the mother in Italy with the daughter in England in a fervent act of faith, and hope, and love!" The same writer says, "The last time I saw this servant of God was on the occasion of a short visit to Tours. I found him more and more occupied with the one thing necessary, but gracious as ever. He insisted on accompanying me to the railway, and carried for me a small flower-pot—the gift of a poor child—saying I was right in encumbering myself with it, as it would give pleasure to *petit Jean*. He spoke to me of God, and looked up to heaven as to our meeting-place. He has remained in my memory as I then beheld him. He was standing with his head uncovered, his features lit up by a summer sunset, his hand raised towards heaven; and from my heart arose the silent invocation, which I trust the Church will some day authorise: 'Blessed Léon Papin-Dupont, pray for me.'"

Scarcely had M. Dupont's *salon* been transformed

into an oratory when the rapid extension of the worship of the Holy Face had rendered it quite inadequate to contain the crowds who resorted there even for the ordinary pious exercises. This was the reason for annexing the two lateral chapels mentioned in the description of the sanctuary. From all quarters applications continue to be made for pictures of the Holy Face, *facsimiles* of that which was venerated by M. Dupont, itself a faithful reproduction of the veil of St. Veronica, and it would be impossible to enumerate the places in which these pious representations are exposed, almost always with a lamp burning before them. They are to be found in private houses as well as in hospitals, convents, public chapels, parish churches, and cathedrals. Even in M. Dupont's lifetime, there was one at the hospital of Vincennes, at the Visitation convent of Paray-le-Monial, and at the Benedictine convent at Arras. Now Notre Dame of Paris, the Cathedral of Perpignan, the Basilica of Lourdes, and the temporary Chapel of the Sacred Heart at Montmartre are provided with them. Confraternities of the Holy Face, similar to that of Tours, are also becoming rapidly multiplied elsewhere. This attraction of souls towards the sorrowful and compassionate Face of the Saviour is explained in a measure by the present state of society, and by the sight of the perils which menace it. Blasphemy and open contempt of God's authority manifest themselves with an unexampled audacity. These are social crimes provoking the anger of God, and calling for public expiation. In itself, devotion to the Holy Face is neither strange nor novel in the Church. Saints, such as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Gertrude, practised it. But what we may well believe to be an inspiration of the Spirit of God, moving the hearts of



the children of the Church, is the special form which it has assumed in these latter times, the prominence given to the relation between this devotion and the disorders of modern society, and the adoption of the Holy Face as the sensible sign of the reparation for which these widespread evils call. Humanly speaking, this salutary remedy would not have been embraced but for the lights communicated to Sister Saint-Pierre and the zeal which consumed M. Dupont.

“Doubtless,” says the Abbé Janvier, “the last word on this subject has not been spoken. Men of God, grave theologians, do not hesitate to assign to the *cultus* of the Holy Face an important part in the future. They seem to foresee in its development happy and magnificent results for the sanctification of souls and the triumph of the Church. They love to view this beautiful devotion, which is so intimately connected with all the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption of the Word, as the complement and crown of the worship of the Sacred Heart. They believe that the Holy Face of Jesus, better known and regarded under its divine aspects of joy, suffering, and glory, will contribute to excite a more popular and sensible devotion to the Divine Person of the Mediator and to foster a more lively and tender love for It.” The work of reparation through the *cultus* of the Holy Face enjoys, moreover, the paternal benediction and encouragement of the Holy Father. We know how the Veil of St. Veronica has been honoured for ages, and is still honoured, at Rome. This blessed representation seemed to the holy man to have been bequeathed to the Church as a precious piece of money, stamped with the effigy of the King of kings, in order to call down on the world, ever tottering to its ruin, the

mercies of the Lord. "The coin of earthly currency," he would say, "is stamped with the head of the sovereign to facilitate a free interchange of the products of earth. Why should not the Kingdom of Heaven also possess its current coin wherewith we may purchase eternal goods? Ought we not, then, often to exclaim, 'O God, our Protector, look upon us, and turn Thine eyes on the Face of Thy Christ.'"

We cannot do better than conclude with the touching words of Mgr. Fava, Bishop of Grenoble, extracted by the Abbé Janvier from a recent work of that illustrious prelate:—"Let us meditate on the Holy Face of our Lord. Who can describe the loveliness of that Adorable Countenance? In it are mirrored the Divine perfections and the most beautiful of souls. It is of that Face, above all, that we may say with St. Paul that the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.\* Yes, in the sweet Face of Jesus are manifested the goodness, the mercy, the majesty, and the infinite power of God, as also the successive joys and sorrows of the Man-God during His mortal life from the Crib to Calvary, where He expired, from His Resurrection to His Ascension into Heaven, where that Face appears to the heavenly court in all the splendour of Divine beauty. 'Who will give me to see the heart of Paul?' cried St. John Chrysostom; and we also exclaim, 'Who will give to us to behold the Face of Jesus, His eyes, His smile, and His adorable features?' On this Face have been depicted all the goodness, all the tenderness, all the grandeur, all the holy indignations, all the sorrows, and all the anguish of the Man-God. It has received the embraces of the Virgin

\* Rom. i. 20.

Mother, and one day also It felt the kiss of Judas, the blow of the servant, and the buffets of the soldiers. At the remembrance of the Blood which flowed down this Holy Face, of the sweat, the tears, the dust, and the spittle with which It was covered, who could remain insensible and not rush forward, like Veronica, to wipe it and lavish upon it countless testimonies of his filial love?"\* "Let us," says the Abbé Janvier, "penetrate ourselves with these sentiments, let us meditate, let us practise, let us make reparation. Like M. Dupont, and so many other generous souls whom his example is raising up on all sides, let us glorify the Holy Face by our prayers and by our works. Let It be our light and our strength during life, and let our last sigh be that cry of love, worthy of a predestined soul: 'May I expire consumed with an ardent thirst to behold the desirable Face of our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

\* *Manuel de la Croisade des Franc-Catholiques*, p. 155.

## DEATH OF ADÈLE.

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SINCE the Life of M. Dupont was written, the following notice has appeared in the *Annals of the Holy Face*, June, 1882 :—

“ Among our deceased associates, of whom it is our intention to make a recommendation every month, we shall give a special place to the benefactors and benefactresses of the work. On this ground, we to-day recommend particularly the good old servant of M. Dupont, Mlle. Adèle Colombe, who died on the 15th of April last, fortified with the sacraments of the Church.

“ This excellent woman, born in Martinique and by extraction a mulatto, had been bought as a slave by M. Dupont's mother when not above seven years old, at a period when negro slavery was not yet abolished in our colonies. M. Dupont emancipated her by the mere fact of bringing her with him to France. She remained attached to his service for well-nigh sixty years, having no surviving relative, and ignorant even of her precise age. M. Dupont used to say of this faithful servant, ‘ Adèle has buried all my dear ones ; she will receive my last sigh.’ And it was she, in fact, who tended and assisted him to his last moments, and that with a boundless self-devotion and a sort of religious respect, regretting only one thing—that she should survive her good and holy master. M. Dupont had taken care to provide for his old servant in his will. Adèle went to board with

the nuns of L'Esperance, where she devoutly spent the remainder of her life, giving herself to prayer and various works of zeal and charity. Far from dreading death in her last illness, she called for it with a kind of impatience, longing to go and rejoin her dear master in Heaven, who, she said, in her simple way, was expecting her and preparing to come to meet her. The Director of the Priests of the Holy Face celebrated her *requiem* Mass at the Cathedral, and many old friends of M. Dupont made a point of accompanying the poor deceased mulatto to her last resting-place.

“We might be disposed to regret her having departed this life before being able to make her deposition in the process of inquiry which Mgr. the Archbishop of Tours is about to open respecting the life and virtues of M. Dupont. Her testimony, however, has already been carefully collected, and in many ways. Her oral deposition could, we believe, have added very little to the information which we already possess.”



## Litanies of the Holy Face

IN REPARATION FOR BLASPHEMIES,

AND TO IMPORE OF GOD, BY THE ADORABLE FACE OF HIS SON,  
THE CONVERSION OF BLASPHEMERS.

LORD, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us.

O adorable Face, which wast adored with profound respect by Mary and Joseph when they saw Thee for the first time,

O adorable Face, which in the stable of Bethlehem didst ravish with joy the Angels, the Shepherds, and the Magi,

O adorable Face, which in the Temple didst transpierce with a dart of love the saintly old man Simeon and the prophetess Anna,

O adorable Face, which wast bathed in tears in Thy holy infancy,

O adorable Face, which, when Thou didst appear in the Temple at twelve years of age, didst fill with admiration the Doctors of the Law,

O adorable Face, white with purity and ruddy with charity,

*Have mercy on us. Gloria.*



O adorable Face, more beautiful than the sun,  
more lovely than the moon, more brilliant than the  
stars,

O adorable Face, fresher than the roses of spring,

O adorable Face, more precious than gold, silver,  
and diamonds,

O adorable Face, whose charms were so ravishing  
and whose grace was so attractive,

O adorable Face, whose every feature was marked  
with nobility,

O adorable Face, contemplated by the Angels,

O adorable Face, sweet delectation of the Saints,

O adorable Face, masterpiece of the Holy Ghost,  
in which the Eternal Father is well pleased,

O adorable Face, delight of Mary and of Joseph,

O adorable Face, ineffable mirror of the Divine  
perfections,

O adorable Face, whose beauty is always ancient  
and always new,

O adorable Face, which appeasest the wrath of  
God,

O adorable Face, which makest the devils tremble,

O adorable Face, treasure of graces and of bless-  
ings,

O adorable Face, exposed in the desert to the  
inclemencies of the weather,

O adorable Face, scorched with the heat of the  
sun and bathed with sweat in Thy journeys,

O adorable Face, whose expression was all  
divine,

O adorable Face, whose modesty and sweetness  
attracted both the just and sinners,

O adorable Face, which gavest a holy kiss to the  
little children, after having blessed them,

O adorable Face, troubled and weeping at the  
tomb of Lazarus,

O adorable Face, brilliant as the sun and radiant  
with glory on Mount Thabor,

*Have mercy on us. Gloria.*

O adorable Face, sorrowful at the sight of Jerusalem and shedding tears over that ungrateful city,

O adorable Face, bowed to the earth in the Garden of Olives and covered with confusion for our sins,

O adorable Face, bathed in a bloody sweat,

O adorable Face, kissed by the traitor Judas,

O adorable Face, whose sanctity and majesty smote the soldiers with fear and cast them to the ground,

O adorable Face, struck by a vile servant, shamefully blindfolded, and profaned by the sacrilegious hands of Thine enemies,

O adorable Face, defiled with spittle and bruised by so many buffets and blows,

O adorable Face, whose Divine look wounded the heart of Peter with a dart of sorrow and love,

O adorable Face, humbled for us at the tribunals of Jerusalem,

O adorable Face, which didst preserve thy serenity when Pilate pronounced the fatal sentence,

O adorable Face, covered with sweat and blood, and falling in the mire under the heavy weight of the Cross,

O adorable Face, worthy of all our respect, veneration, and worship,

O adorable Face, wiped with a veil by a pious woman, on the road to Calvary,

O adorable Face, raised on the instrument of most shameful punishment,

O adorable Face, whose brow was crowned with thorns,

O adorable Face, whose eyes were filled with tears of blood,

O adorable Face, whose mouth was drenched with gall and vinegar,

O adorable Face, whose hair and beard were plucked out by the executioners,

O adorable Face, which wast made like to that of a leper,

O adorable Face, whose incomparable beauty was obscured under the dreadful cloud of the sins of the world,

O adorable Face, covered with the sad shades of death,

O adorable Face, washed and anointed by Mary and the holy women, and wrapped in a shroud,

O adorable Face, inclosed in the sepulchre,

O adorable Face, all resplendent with glory and beauty on the day of the Resurrection,

O adorable Face, all dazzling with light at the moment of Thy Ascension,

O adorable Face, hidden in the Eucharist,

O adorable Face, which wilt appear at the end of time, in the clouds, with great power and majesty,

O adorable Face, which wilt cause sinners to tremble,

O adorable Face, which wilt fill the just with joy for all eternity,

*Have mercy on us. Gloria.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,  
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,  
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy on us.

#### PRAYERS.

I salute Thee, I adore Thee, and I love Thee, O Jesus, my Saviour, outraged anew by blasphemers, and I offer Thee, in the heart of Blessed Mary, as an incense and perfume of sweet odour, the homage of the Angels and of all the Saints, humbly beseeching Thee, by the virtue of Thy Holy Face, to repair and renew in me and in all men Thy image disfigured by sin. Amen.

I salute Thee, I adore Thee, and I love Thee, O adorable Face of Jesus, my Beloved, noble Seal of the Divinity; I apply myself to Thee with all the powers of my

soul, and I most humbly beseech Thee to imprint in us all the features of Thy divine likeness. Amen.

*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*

By a Rescript dated January 27th, 1875, his Holiness Pope Pius IX. grants to all who recite, with a contrite heart, the above prayers in honour of the Holy Face of Jesus Christ an indulgence of a hundred days, for each time, applicable to the souls in Purgatory.

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#### PRAYER OF POPE PIUS IX.

O my Jesus, cast upon us a look of mercy; turn Thy Face towards each of us, as Thou didst to Veronica, not that we may see It with our bodily eyes, for this we do not deserve, but turn It towards our hearts, so that, remembering Thee, we may ever draw from this fountain of strength the vigour necessary to sustain the combats of life. Amen.

#### ASPIRATION OF SISTER SAINT-PIERRE.

Eternal Father, we offer Thee the Adorable Face of Thy well-beloved Son, for the honour and glory of Thy Holy Name, and for the conversion of France and England.

*The Litanies may be obtained from the Director of the Work of the Holy Face, 8 Rue St. Etienne, Tours, or through Messrs. Burns & Oates, Granville Mansions, Orchard Street, London, W.*

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